Guide to slacking

pages ten & eleven

End of the video store

page seventeen

Betting on the birds for 57 years.

MARTLET

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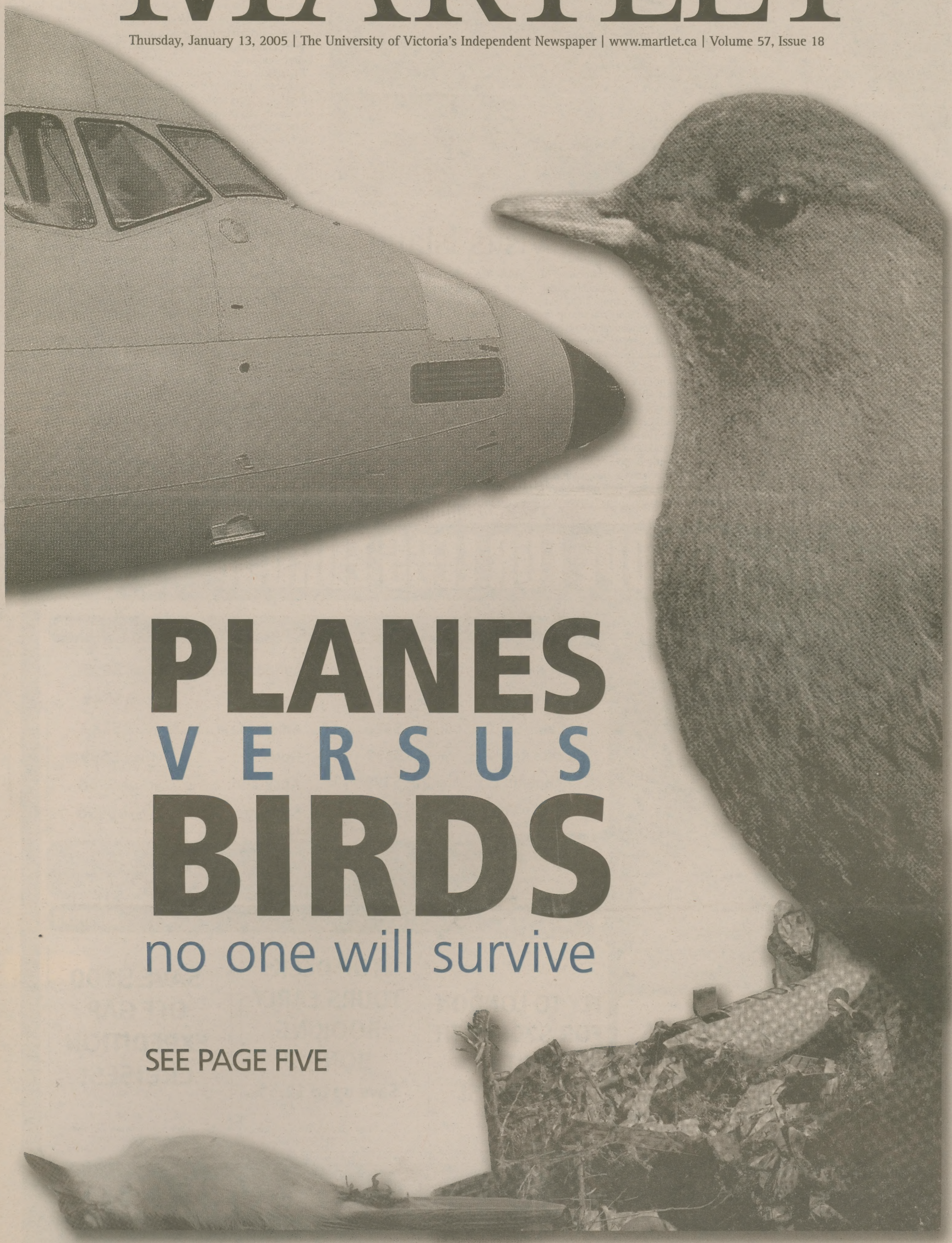

PLANES VERSUS BIRDS

no one will survive

SEE PAGE FIVE

AARON MCMILLAN PHOTO

Canadian winter weather visits Island

by Megan Stewart

Weekend snowfall challenged the winter survival instincts of Island residents.

Anthough precipitation failed to compate the the Blizzard on '96, power and transportation were nonetheless negatively impacted.

Ice has been blamed for causing an E&N Dayliner train to slip off its tracks early Monday morning north of Victoria. The passenger train did not topple over, said Via Rail spokesperson Catherine Kaloutsky, and none of the 21 people on-board were injured.

Kaloutsky said that ice was likely the cause of Monday's derailment. Train travel up and down the Island was cancelled during the weekend because of branches and trees that had fallen across the tracks due to heavy snow. The passenger train makes a daily round trip up the east coast of Vancouver Island, and it resumed regular service Tuesday.

Heavy snow also affected power lines, and electricity was sporadically cut to houses throughout Victoria. BC Hydro crews were out all weekend fixing the lines, according to spokesperson Ted Olynyk, who said falling branches were to blame. As of Tuesday, some residents in the Gulf Islands and along the Malahat were still without power.

Environment Canada had issued a snowfall warning for the Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island, which called for below-freezing temperatures mixed with much precipitation over the weekend. Average temperatures for January fall as low as two degrees Celsius, meaning snow is generally a rarity. However, a ridge of high pressure over the interior of the province caused unusually low temperatures across British Columbia.

Any flake of snow found in Victoria has citizens talking about the infamous blizzard in '96 that blanketed the city in more than 150 centimetres of snow from late December to early January. Residents unaccustomed to the wintry weather were forced into survival mode, and T-shirts reading, "I Survived the Blizzard of '96" can be found in thrift shops today.

Campus shows compassion for tsunami victims

by Bryna Hallam

Campus groups are coming together to support victims of the tsunamis in Asia.

A collection drive called "Campus Compassion" is a joint effort by a number of campus clubs, including Circle K, UNICEF and World University Services Canada (WUSC). The group will be collecting donations from Jan. 17 to 21 in the Student Union Building.

In particular, they are looking for donations of summer clothing, personal hygiene items such as toothbrushes, first aid supplies, linens, toys and school supplies. Monetary donations are also gladly accepted and should be made out to UNICEF.

The donations are being shipped through the Compassionate Resource Warehouse (CRW), located in Victoria.

UVic's Circle K club, a service club associated with Kiwanis, has been involved with CRW for a number of years, said club co-president Leslie Bootle. Circle K volunteers with CRW on a regular basis to sort, pack and ship donations to different areas of the world.

The CRW is a project of the Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, which is affiliated with the Church of Nazarene.

As well as working with Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, CRW partners with other agencies in order to get relief shipments to areas in need.

CRW is planning two shipments to tsunami-hit areas. The first will be to the Maldives and the second to Sri Lanka. Donations collected at UVic will be included in the shipment to Sri Lanka.

The UVic Chamber Singers have planned a benefit concert for tsunami victims. The concert, "For the Children: A Benefit Concert for Tsunami Victims," is scheduled for Jan. 21, 8 p.m. at St. Aidan's United Church.

Admission is $20 with proceeds going to Save the Children, a worldwide non-profit relief organization. Additional donations will be accepted at the concert and will qualify for a tax receipt.

"These people are going to need all the help they can get," said conductor Dr. Bruce More, a professor of conducting at UVic's school of music. "The Chamber Singers have a good following in this community, and we think we can make a difference for these families. As well, the students are really into it."

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AARON MCMILLAN PHOTOS

Less than half of people getting to campus choose to come by car.

Fewer people are driving to campus as more students, staff and faculty take public transit or bike

by Bryna Hallam

Less people are driving to the university, according to a traffic audit conducted in October 2004.

For the first time since the university began keeping track of how people get to campus in 1992, fewer than half—47.1 per cent—are driving.

The count saw an increase in other forms of transportation, including public transit and cycling.

Sarah Webb, UVic's Sustainability Co-ordinator, says the addition of nearly 400 residence rooms at UVic this fall has already had an impact on traffic to campus. "Parking pass sales are generally down this year. We can definitely correlate the difference to the addition of on-campus housing," she said.

Independent auditing firm Brunt and Associates conducts the count, which occurs every four years. It is designed to provide a snapshot of traffic and transportation patterns. It is also hoped that it will demonstrate changes that have occurred as a result of UVic policies and practices.

For example, parking fees have increased by an average of almost 50 per cent since the last traffic audit in 2000.

In addition to the increase in parking fees, Webb believes that the decrease in drivers can be attributed to an increased awareness about the true costs of driving, including gas and environmental impacts.

Transit now accounts for more than a quarter of the trips made to campus. The U-Pass bus pass for UVic students was introduced in 1999. The fees for the pass are mandatory and have risen from $44 to $56 per semester since then. In comparison, a monthly bus pass costs $52 per month.

The audit also identifies a number of initiatives that may have contributed to the increased number of cyclists, including the addition of bike lockers and shelters, the creation of a bike bursary program and an annual Cycling Awareness Week.

UVic's Campus Plan, completed in 2003, intends to guide the growth and development of the campus. One of its goals is to "reduce motor vehicle traffic to campus and to encourage the increased use of public transit, cycling and walking."

Webb says the data from this latest audit will assist the university in reaching its goals.

"It's an opportunity to improve our practices," she said.

Campus group aims to increase refugee sponsorship

World University Service of Canada is petitioning for an extra 50 cents to bring refugee students to UVic

by Patrick Szpak

Members of UVic's World University Service of Canada (WUSC) endured harsh weather Jan.6 to raise awareness for the plight of the world's refugees and raise support for WUSC initiatives on campus.

Although originally intended as a refugee camp simulation, including identification checks, the participants were forced to change their plans because of bad weather, said WUSC coordinator Ashley Heaslip.

The 20 participants set up tents and information tables and held a vigil on the night of the event to reflect on refugee issues and the recent tsunami disaster in Asia.

"[Students] were excited that people were talking about refugee issues," said Heaslip.

Engineers Without Borders also put up displays dealing with sanitation and water issues in refugee camps.

Despite the weather, WUSC achieved its two goals: raising awareness about the issues facing the world's 17 million refugees, and collecting student signatures needed to add a question to the student referendum during the March UVSS elections.

The referendum would ask students to increase financial support for the WUSC refugee sponsorship program from 50 cents to one dollar. Currently, the refugee sponsorship program enables WUSC to bring one student to UVic every other year, for one year's worth of study. Sponsored students have lived in a refugee camp and have had their education disrupted in their home country. If approved by a student vote, the fee increase would allow WUSC to sponsor a student every year.

WUSC collected over 200 signatures during the refugee camp demonstration, but they need a minimum of 2,000 to put their 50-cent fee increase to a student referendum.

Heaslip added that the participants also collected over $200 for relief aid in the regions hit by the Indian Ocean tsunamis.

The federal government mach the sum collected.

WUSC was established in 1939 in response to the need to encourage international understanding. The group is committed to fostering human development and global understanding through education and training.

In addition to sponsoring refugee students, WUSC also sends Canadians throughout the developing world to improve quality of life by helping communities become self-reliant and enhancing the effectiveness of local organizations.

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B. BRADY PHOTO

Victoria's first Homeless Count is scheduled for Jan. 15, but a local group of local homeless people is refusing to participate and is encouraging others to do the same.

Homeless say 'Count me out'

Citizens' group worried about privacy violations and intrusive nature of count

by Bryna Hallam

A plan by the Capital Regional District (CRD) and the Victoria Cool Aid Society to conduct the area's first Homeless Count is being challenged by a local group.

The Ad-Hoc Homeless Committee-Victoria Region, self-described as a loose-knit group of concerned citizens, says that Cool Aid's plan to have volunteers wake homeless people in order to interview them is intrusive.

The count is meant to provide CRD municipalities with information about the full extent of homelessness in the region.

While acknowledging Cool Aid's "good intentions," the Ad-Hoc Homeless Committee wrote in a letter to Cool Aid, "In our minds, [waking people] amounts to another violation of homeless people's already compromised right to privacy."

The committee, composed exclusively of people in the homeless community, also says that waking people could "induce crisis and anxiety" and asks that Cool Aid "distance itself" from a practice they claim is used by police and security forces.

Mia Liebe, a spokesperson for the committee, says they don't want to hurt the agencies involved with the count, but that they question their main motivation and methods.

"They're forcing us to give them information," said Leibe, "and [they are] putting us on the spot in a really major way."

The group is concerned that homeless people will feel obligated to respond to the questions.

They also feel that the count forces homeless people into the open and into contact with groups. "Maybe we don't want to be contacted with 'help,'" said Leibe. "Maybe we want to be free."

The group is also dissatisfied with the lack of services available from local agencies. Liebe says that some things—food and clothing—are readily available. "Is there caring? No. Is there someone to listen? Not for long."

In response to the committee's concerns about the count, Dana Oshiro, Cool Aid's communications manager, says that they have taken every precaution to make the count as "respectful as possible."

The count is scheduled to take place Jan. 15 from midnight until 6 a.m. and will cover downtown Victoria, James Bay, Beacon Hill Park, Fernwood, Hillside, Foul Bay, Saanich, Esquimalt and the Galloping Goose Trail. Information will also be collected from service agencies.

The Ad-Hoc Homeless Committee is telling people that their sleeping spots will be mapped and that any information gathered during the count will be made available to anyone who wants it, including the police and the government.

The group is also telling people that they can avoid the count by sleeping indoors, by sleeping outside city limits, by squatting or by forming a tent city.

"We will attempt to wake people," confirms Oshiro, "and the reason for that is because so often these are people who aren't counted. We look at it in a way where if you don't wake somebody up and ask them for their information, they're going to find out that other people have been counted that evening and that they've been passed over again."

Count organizers felt that conducting the count during the night would be the best way to get accurate information, since people wouldn't be moving around.

In preparing for the count, Cool Aid consulted with a number of different agencies and focus groups, and used their feedback to design the process. Groups involved include the Salvation Army, the Mustard Seed Street Church and the Open Door Inner City Ministry.

"For every homeless person you see, there are hundreds you don't," said Lieutenant-Colonel Donald Copple, divisional commander of the Salvation Army. "And an important first step in helping these people is identifying them."

Oshiro says that confidentiality has been one of the biggest concerns on the project, noting that the media can use neither pictures nor names of the people counted.

"This is not meant to be dehumanizing in any way. We're looking at the project as basically being an awareness piece," she said.

In addition, no one is required to answer any questions. If people do opt to participate, the surveys require only identification—which could be a name or a description—to be used to ensure that people are not being counted more than once.

Contrary to what the Ad-Hoc Homeless Committee claims, Oshiro says that any personal information collected will not be given out to other groups. Specifically, the numbers collected will be made available, as will the general information from the surveys. But personal information, including the maps of where people sleep, will not be given out.

Oshiro also says she invited the Ad-Hoc Homeless Committee to discuss their concerns with her, but they have not responded.

The count was called for following the proclamation of Homeless Day by nine CRD municipalities. It is designed to increase public awareness of homelessness and provide information to support policy development and services.

NEWS BRIEFS

BSE plagues Canadian beef

American agricultural officials will visit Canadian cattle farms to investigate a third case of mad cow disease found in Alberta, likely stalling plans to re-open the border to imported Canadian cattle and beef.

The case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) was confirmed Jan. 3, 2005, three days after the United States announced plans to re-open its borders this coming March.

Administrators from the American Animal and Plant Heath Inspection service said protection to domestic species is their "top priority." The status of the border will not change until the results of the investigation are released next week.

American borders were closed to live Canadian cattle in May 2003 when the first case of BSE was discovered in an Alberta cow.

The American ban on beef and cattle imports has cost the Canadian beef industry an estimated $5 billion.

— M.S.

Palestinians elect leader

Mahmoud Abbas became the new leader of the Palestinian Authority Sunday after winning 62 per cent of the vote.

He replaces Yasser Arafat, who died in November. Abbas, a former elementary school teacher, was prime minister under Arafat. However, he resigned in September 2003 after a falling out with the late Palestinian leader.

Abbas, who has a reputation for promoting peace, is viewed as more moderate than Arafat.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called Jan. 11 to congratulate Abbas on his victory.

Sharon formed a coalition with the Israeli Labour Party on Monday, paving the way for peace talks between the two leaders. As part of the civil service, Abbas helped found Palestine's current governing faction, Fatah. He has been advocating peace with Israel since the 1970s.

— D.K.

Naked statue turns heads

A nude statue in Penticton is to blame for distracting drivers and nearly causing a number of traffic accidents.

The Baggage Handler, a 2.2-metre statue of a nude man surrounded by colourful suitcases, cost $5,000 to install and is now drawing criticism from citizens. Artist Michael Hermesh was instructed to bolt a rectangular metal plate in front of the figure's genitalia, but councilors later elected to remove it.

The statue, representing an individual's emotional baggage, will come down permanently in September when a newly commissioned piece will be erected.

— M.S.

Birds small problem for airplanes

by David Karp

B. BRADY PHOTO

Bird strikes occur when an airplane collides with birds of any kind and have resulted in 388 worldwide deaths since 1912.

It's not a bird. It's not a plane. It's a bird strike and there's nothing super about it.

Every year, roughly 1,000 collisions are reported between airplanes and birds in Canada. Known as bird strikes, the Victoria International Airport's Fire Service recorded 10 last year, and Transport Canada's numbers show 21 bird strikes in 2003. In recent years, the Federal Aviation Administration has reported close to 5,000 bird strikes annually in the United States and countless more go uncounted, as they are not mandatory to report.

The severity of bird strikes varies, but the bird usually suffers the worst fate.

One Transport Canada official, a pilot with over 10,000 logged kilometres, can recall hitting dozens of birds. "We had one hit the fresh air intake for the heat exchanger and pressurization," he said. "And boy, that sure stunk."

The pilot, who wished to remain anonymous, described smacking various fowl and sending them into the cowling of piston aircraft. Once under the cowling, or engine cover, the flight was called short because the aircraft was overheating. Hitting birds, this pilot said, can be "like hitting a bug."

"I've hit [a bird] on the windshield and it's just splattered on the windshield and we've kept on going. It depends on how big the bird is. It depends on where you hit it. I've hit ducks and starlings and seagulls. It's like hitting a bug. It's very rarely that there are any problems with it."

Despite the fortunes of most birds, the majority of bird strikes are not serious for passengers inside the plane. However, in 2003, Canadian aircraft aborted takeoff or made emergency landings 91 times due to bird strikes. Six of those resulted in a bird penetrating an airplane, and three bird strikes shut down the plane's engine.

Firefighters such as Stacey Lee try to prevent bird strikes at the Victoria International Airport by clearing birds off the runways. "We'll go out and scare them off," Lee explained. "We'll use cracker shells or little screamers. It's almost like a little pyrotechnics show."

If loud noise and bright lights aren't enough to drive birds away, the crew will shoot live ammunition at them. "If you get called out three times for the same flock, you need to shoot one. Typically, we don't take many in a year, but we certainly take a few."

Clearing birds away from runways is essential in preventing bird strikes because most occur at low altitudes during takeoff or landing. But not everyone approves of the tactics.

Dr. Richard Thomas of BirdLife International, a bird conservation society, sees the airport's practice of shooting birds as "counter-productive."

"Birds just become more wary and flighty, making them more likely to lift off at the sight or noise of an approaching aircraft," said Thomas. "I don't believe it is an effective control measure."

Lee noted that most bird strikes occur during rainy periods since the wet weather brings the worms out of the ground. "The seagulls will feed, and they're usually the ones that will get clipped by the planes."

Bird strikes are not new to aviation. In fact, they have occurred since people began taking flight. The first known bird strike was a minor incident in 1908 and involved the Wright brothers, the inventors of the airplane. Cal Rogers, the first person to fly across the continental United States, died during a test flight in 1912 after his plane collided with a gull and crashed into the Pacific Ocean.

The deadliest bird strike in history occurred on Oct. 4, 1960, when an Eastern Airlines flight collided with a flock of starlings shortly after taking off from Boston's Logan International Airport. The collision caused three of the plane's four engines to malfunction, and the flight crashed into Boston Harbour, killing all but 10 of the 72 passengers on board.

Bird strikes usually result in thousands of dollars in damage to aircraft. The most expensive bird strike likely occurred in 1995, when an Air France flight crossed paths with a flock of Canada geese while landing at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York. Two engines were destroyed along with various electric cables. The damage was believed to be over $7 million US. The airport was sued and eventually settled out of court for $5.3 million US.

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Canada poised to make a decision on same-sex marriage

by Megan Stewart

The Canadian Constitution allows Parliament to pass law relating to marriage, divorce and the civil union. Late last year, Prime Minister Paul Martin tabled legislation on the contentious issue of same-sex marriage, and the nation's elected representatives will discuss and potentially redefine the status-quo within the next few months.

When the Constitution was written in 1867, same-sex marriage was an inconceivable notion. But at the same time, the document was described as a "living tree" which could adapt and even welcome changing social conditions and ideas.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms exists within the Constitution as a legal body that promotes "a free and democratic society." Through the charter, governments are limited to passing law that does not discriminate or infringe on human rights. Coming into effect in 1985, section 16 of the charter states, "every individual is equal before the law [. . .] without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."

Despite their explicit lack from this list, the courts also recognize sexual orientation and marital status as unacceptable grounds for discrimination. Moreover, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that denying gays and lesbians the right to marry was unconstitutional.

As a result, Parliament has a decision to make. Here are its main options and concerns.

Redefine marriage

In December, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Parliament has the power to change the definition of marriage from the union of "a man and a woman" to that of "two people." Parliament can vote to legalize the definition, and Justice Minister Irwin Cotler has said he will present a bill acknowledging such terms. At this time, six provinces—including British Columbia—and one territory recognize the legal status of same-sex marriage. Religious groups across the country have spoken out in protest to this legalized change. "Redefining marriage will undermine the very institution on which the well-being of our society depends," reads the homepage at enshrinemarriage.ca, a site devoted to a campaign to preserve marriage.

Adopt the civil union

Civil union is the notion that partners can enjoy all the legal benefits, but not the title of marriage. According to the Department of Justice, "the so-called 'separate-but-equal' civil union model is not an option." Cotler has described the construction as "less than equal [since] civil unions really hark back to separate but equal." Parliament, however, lacks jurisdiction in this realm, since the Charter deals with "marriage and divorce," leaving all relationships short of marriage to the jurisdiction of provincial courts.

B. BRADY PHOTO

Liberals plan to introduce a bill to make same-sex marriages legal across Canada.

Reaffirm the traditional definition of marriage

"The traditional definition of marriage or the opposite-sex requirement for marriage is unconstitutional," Cotler said in a December news conference. Although sexual orientation is not an explicit clause in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Supreme Court's refusal to declare whether the opposite-sex requirement for marriage goes against the charter or not is a sign the court is leaving the decision up to Parliament. Additionally, constitutional expert and counsel for the Canadian government on same-sex legislation Peter Hogg wrote after the Court's ruling that it had, in fact, "dropped some broad hints" that the current, traditional definition is "discriminatory and contrary to the charter."

Hold a referendum

Polls from various news groups and non-profit organizations have churned out inconclusive results as to citizen's feeling toward redefining marriage. Hogg wrote in the *Globe and Mail* that while it is a legal option, a referendum would be "expensive and divisive." Alberta Premier Ralph Klein has so far been the most out-spoken supporter of a referendum on the issue.

Implementing the notwithstanding clause

The government can override legislation through section 33 of the charter and render any law temporarily "notwithstanding." Parliament could effectively re-enact the traditional definition of marriage for up to five years when the ruling would essentially expire and be reviewed by a new government. The prime minister has repeatedly said he will not use the clause, and Opposition leader Stephen Harper, despite his opposition to same-sex marriage, has denied any plans to implement the clause. Only Parliament can put the clause into effect. Hogg explains: "Although the provinces have the right to use the clause to escape from the charter, they can only do so for the laws that are within their responsibility." Marriage, however, falls under federal jurisdiction, and provinces have no legal sway.

Securing religious freedoms

Same-sex marriage will become legal through the country if Parliament passes the bill the Liberal government plans to introduce. Respecting the right and freedoms of religion, churches, synagogues and mosques around Canada would not be required to sanctify any same-sex marriage.

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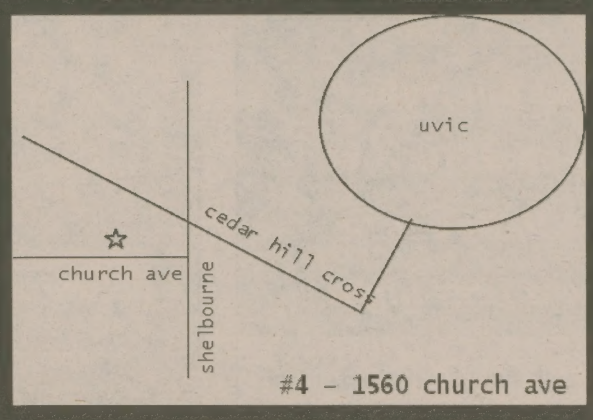

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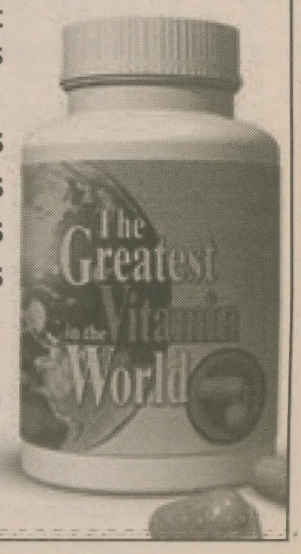

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National day of mourning draws few in capital

Officials, families and public gather to pay respects to Canadians taken by tsunami

by Megan Thomas, CUP Ottawa Bureau Chief

OTTAWA (CUP) — The compassionate words of Prime Minister Paul Martin echoed around the hollow-sounding Ottawa hockey rink, reflecting off the more than 14,000 empty chairs in the 15,000-seat venue.

Speaking as part of a national mourning ceremony Jan. 8 for those lost in the tsunami disaster in Asia, Martin spoke of "towns and lives that have been swept away" and about "a sea that has become a cemetery."

"We are a nation and a world assembled in grief and resolved to help," Martin said.

However, reporters seemed to nearly outnumber the meagre crowd they trolled for reactions to the event.

Clifford Garrard, a retired member of the Canadian Foreign Service who now lives in Ottawa, was struck by the contrast between the way Canadians opened their wallets after the tragedy and the poor attendance at the mourning ceremony.

"It's paradoxical," Clifford said. "But I refuse to allow that to spoil what I think was a lovely ceremony."

Clifford and wife Felicity were compelled to attend after their daughter narrowly missed being caught up in the mayhem. She was scheduled to fly to Sri Lanka for a friend's wedding the day the waves struck. Some of the wedding party was injured but luckily not seriously, Felicity said.

"It has actually haunted us. It has been with us since it occurred," Clifford said of the tsunami disaster.

The Garrards were also drawn to the event because they had travelled and lived in Asia, including Sri Lanka, one of the countries hardest hit.

Prashanthi Nadarajah attended with her father to honour members of their family in Sri Lanka who have had their world turned upside down by the devastating waves. The University of Ottawa management student said luckily all her family members survived and just one was hospitalized. Still, she worries for those who continue to struggle to rebuild their lives.

Nadarajah and her father are from northeastern Sri Lanka, and they are concerned that the long-standing conflict between the government and Tamil rebels will hinder aid efforts in the area.

"There are homeless people, and they need the help right now," Nadarajah said.

Nadarajah has been going door to door to help raise money for the Tamil (Sri Lanka) Refugee Aid Society in Ottawa, at one point raising $800 in a day.

While Hoda Beshir and Fatima Ahmed don't know any of the more than 150 Canadians still missing, they wanted to be at the mourning ceremony to express their compassion to those who have suffered a loss.

"There is not much that we can do, and I thought it would be a way for us to support the families," said Ahmed, a nursing student at the University of Ottawa.

The families of the five Canadians confirmed dead sat in the front row, some holding photos of loved ones lost, others draping an arm around the shoulder of another for support.

Beshir was disappointed more Canadians didn't attend the ceremony to show how much the country feels for those affected by the tragedy. But Beshir said having a designated national day of mourning was an important way to quantify the compassion of Canadians across the country.

"It's the people, and how much they care and how much they gave, that showed (Martin) how important it is to our country," Beshir said.

MEGAN THOMAS PHOTO

Waiting to gather donations from the crowds that never came.

Newfoundland drops Canadian flag

Memorial University caught up in oil revenue debate

by Nadya Bell, CUP Atlantic Bureau Chief

ST. JOHN'S, Nfld. (CUP) — Many Newfoundlanders stopped flying the Canadian flag on Christmas Eve in frustration with the federal government's handling of offshore oil revenues.

Premier Danny Williams ordered the flag removed from provincial government buildings after he rejected the latest offer to share the royalties from oil with Ottawa.

His government's economists figure the province could collect over a billion dollars in 2006-07, but only if Prime Minister Paul Martin agrees to give Newfoundland and Labrador 100 per cent of the oil money.

Currently, each dollar made from oil is deducted from federal equalization payments.

Several businesses, municipalities and organizations followed the premier's actions and lowered the Canadian flag, including Memorial University of Newfoundland.

The university's highest and smallest governing body, the executive committee of the board of regents, decided unanimously Dec. 24 to lower the flag.

But many outspoken academics have called on Memorial to reinstate the Maple Leaf, and debate has been tense since the university created a web forum Jan. 6 for discussion on the matter.

Elliott Leyton, professor emeritus of anthropology at Memorial, said it is unfortunate the university is playing a visibly partisan role in the political debate.

"I believe that the lowering of the flags by the university is a form of grovelling to the present government. Indeed, I find the whole matter to be an astonishingly childish one and deeply embarrassing to Memorial," said Leyton.

Although the university followed the premier's lead in removing the flag, Memorial president Axel Meisen maintains it was an independent action by the school and not inherently political.

"It had become quite apparent that the action taken by the premier had a strong echo in the hearts, minds and the expressions of many Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans," said Meisen.

Meisen says reflecting the opinion of the Newfoundland and Labrador people is an important part of Memorial, showing the close connection between the university and the people of the province.

The head of the political science department, Stephen Wolinetz, disagrees with the president's view.

"It fundamentally compromises the autonomy of the university," he said.

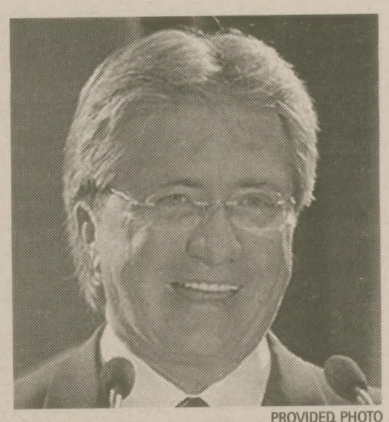
Wolinetz also argues Premier Williams's actions were counterproductive for the negotiating process.

"The only way in which the action makes sense is as a way of enhancing one's bargaining power with a different government, which would be a Stephen Harper government after this one falls," said Wolinetz.

He says he thinks Newfoundland and Labrador's seats could go Conservative in a federal election if the Atlantic Accord remains an issue, especially after the death of a prominent Liberal MP in Labrador last month.

Although provincial buildings and the university have removed their Canadian flags, the provincial court buildings replaced theirs after many court judges were concerned it reflected on judicial impartiality.

"Sooner or later, the flag will go up again. I have no doubt about that. It just is a question of timing," said Meisen. "The province remains part of Canada. That's not the issue."



PROVIDED PHOTO

Danny Williams, Premier of Newfoundland and the man behind the flag dropping.

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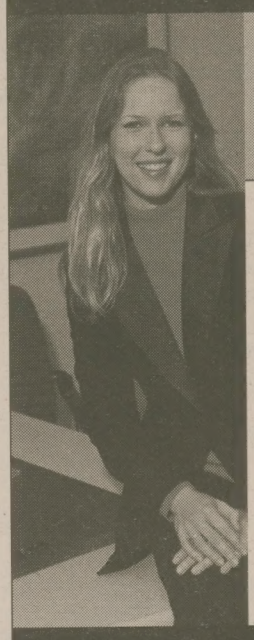

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Editorial

Spotlight on tsunami blinds us from other disasters

In the past two and a half weeks, $4 billion (U.S.) has been pledged worldwide to tsunami relief. That's approaching the same amount that the UN received for all its humanitarian work across the globe last year. So why is that we need an earthquake and a giant wave to pry open our wallets?

The public, presumably overwhelmed by the sprawling media coverage of the disaster, has given aid in record numbers. Celebrities are chipping in, donating cash out of their pocket (à la Sandra Bullock) or organizing benefit concerts and telethons to raise funds for tsunami relief. Most websites now have links to relief agencies.

It's going so well, in fact, that the medical aid agency Medecins sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders, MSF) last week said it would no longer accept donations for tsunami aid—it has enough for the time being. Instead, it's asking donors to give unrestricted gifts so that the money can be used in ongoing aid packages in other countries.

This is where we need to sit up and take notice.

Six hundred thousand die each year from the measles; 1.8 million from diarrhea; two million from tuberculosis; and upwards of two million from malaria. AIDS is even worse, killing somewhere between two and three million people each year.

"As many people died of AIDS since the tsunami as died in the tsunami," the executive director of MSF told *the Globe and Mail* last week. "But it's not a shock anymore."

These don't garner the media spotlight like the immediate death of 150,000 people; the destruction can't easily be captured by a video camera sweeping over the shoreline. Or maybe they're old hat: we've seen and ignored the commercials with malnourished children and washed-up celebrities; AIDS has been talked about for years. The tsunami is new, unexpected.

There are reports of would-be donors who refused to donate to an unspecified fund with MSF—which would help in the plight of the millions mentioned above—instead dumping their money into the already overloaded tsunami relief.

As well, aid groups like Oxfam are worried that money put aside for African relief is being shifted to Asia—funds might end up being "borrowed" from money meant to help with conflicts in Sudan, Uganda and the Congo, where a five-year war has claimed over three million lives. It's political posturing at its worst, with leaders putting on a show to try and increase their reputation in the world. Not all donations will be honoured, either—a year after an earthquake killed 26,000 people in Iran, the country says it has received only $17.5 million of a promised $1 billion.

Most charities are promising to cap their tsunami fundraising when they have enough money and that will likely be the end of the giving. No more celebrity telethons, no urgent appeals from world leaders, no more kids donating their hard-earned paper route savings. It's cynical but true: when a disaster isn't given around the clock media coverage, it slips from our collective consciousness. The true disaster is that we don't donate on a regular basis, when millions of deaths from malaria, diarrhea, AIDS and other diseases can be easily prevented. A five-dollar mosquito net can guard against malaria—it's that simple.

There's an easy solution: don't stop giving. When donating to aid agencies, specify that the money be put in a general fund, or ask which crises need cash now and send the money that way—it will take years for the tsunami funds to be used up, while your donation to aid in Sudan will help feed the 3.2 million people facing starvation there this year.

Look for organizations that help people in need here in Victoria or in B.C. as well—seeing signs in Starbucks asking for tsunami donations while people sleep on the cold sidewalk outside is a disaster in itself.

The outpouring of financial support from the global community has been outstanding. We can only hope that this becomes the new standard for aid.

Editorial topics are decided at weekly editorial meetings and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of all staff members.

Don't like what you read? Write us, or write for us.
edit@martlet.ca

GRAHAM STARK GRAPHIC

"Well, the weather report said to expect snow, so I just figured I'd get it over with now and save time."

LETTERS

Campbell didn't 'sneak' around

In Jan. 6's *Martlet*, Ingmar Lee rants about how Premier Campbell "sneaked" on campus. If his assertion is true, it's most likely because he did not want to have to deal with a bunch of demagogues, serial whiners and shit-disturbers. I don't blame him. In any case, the opening of the new building, and the fully funded spaces for medical students there, is one example of tuition increases being put to good use.

Matthew Lebrun

Iraqi blog story one-sided

I must express a sincere disappointment with *the Martlet*'s Jan. 6 "Getting the real story from Iraq" article. A very one-sided search process was undoubtedly used to pick and choose which Iraqi blogs to feature because they seem to contain one particular perspective. Any quick Google search can show you that the listed blogs (especially those discussed in the feature article) are not representative of what's out there.

Some of the first ones I came up with were:

http://iraqthemodel.blogspot.com
http://iraqataglance.blogspot.com
http://healingiraq.blogspot.com
http://nabilsblog.blogspot.com

Contrary to what his disarming namesake suggests, Salam Pax is from a very—how shall we say?—distinct group of bloggers from Iraq and is almost certainly in the minority. Although not blogs, try looking up:

http://www.untoldiraq.org
http://www.thetruthaboutiraq.org
http://www.voicesofiraq.com

Or any number of other sites. Guess what? It's not all blood and guts over there! I certainly have no illusions that what I say will be taken at face value. After all, I just cited blogs and stats. Anybody could be writing those things!

Jarrett Plonka

Tsunami not 'coming soon'

Let's lay off the fear-mongering. Yes, many of us do know that an earthquake will happen; that's a fact. But a headline like yours, with the words "coming soon," screams sensationalism and poor taste. Not to mention that it's misleading and inarticulate.

Danielle Janess

Sex sells, but it doesn't sell toothpaste

by Iris Tse, *the Gateway*

EDMONTON (CUP) — Given that crime shows are the new black, I was half expecting to see a brand new offering of *CSI: Nantucket* when I plopped in front of the TV last night. However, instead of dead bodies, formulaic storylines and magical crime-solving abilities at the 50-minute mark, I was surprisingly confronted by some scantily-clad lady prancing around my TV screen.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, it wasn't the insult to feminism/prime-time soft-core porn known as the Victoria's Secret "fashion" show. No, my friend, this was way worse. Instead of trying to sell me rhinestone-studded push-up bras, this scantily-clad lady was trying to sell me desensitizing toothpaste.

As if that wasn't enough, the creators of the commercial saw fit to throw in a crotch shot while they were at it. I wasn't sure if I was shocked or appalled, though probably both. Perhaps I'm old fashioned, but one would expect a toothpaste commercial to include, oh, I don't know, people brushing their teeth, but certainly not crotch shots. In fact, the only time "crotch" and "toothpaste" belong in the same sentence is when you're explaining your minty fetish to Dan Savage.

Now, don't get me wrong. I know sex sells. Tennis matches are made more attractive by the napkin-sized skirts worn by the female players. Lindsey Lohan's breasts are grabbing more headlines than her "acting" and "singing." And then there are shows like *Desperate Housewives*.

But it's going way beyond that nowadays. Last I checked, a certain shampoo still clamours for our attention by convincing us that their brand can give us a better orgasm than a human counterpart, and one gum ad even implied that by chewing their stuff, you'd be rewarded with spontaneous sex in public places. What's next? Swiffer Dusters? Lysol? Pizza Pops?

And seeing this, one has to wonder if sex is really selling anymore. Sure, the brand recognition is superb, but not too many of us buy a can of pop just because some gyrating pop-tart endorses it.

The University of Alberta Student Union tried the same route by plastering the campus with dildo posters in its last election, and they got a pitiful 25 per cent voter turnout for their trouble. And I really doubt that something as inherently unsexy as toothpaste is going to benefit from a few crotch shots and sexual innuendoes.

Obviously, sex isn't the solution for every ad campaign. But with the way it is right now, it seems the dingbats who create these ads are too stupid to come up with something not involving the missionary position. Apparently the entire human population has turned into nymphomaniacs so sexually deprived that there's no better way to attract our attention than the promise of sex.

Nowadays, popular media is saturated with sexual images. It's impossible to tune in to any primetime TV show without some obligatory sexual content, and surely copying a page from the *Kama Sutra* isn't the best way to distinguish your product from the shows themselves. Here's a tip to the ad guys: leave out the crotch shots and try coming up with something more creative the next time you try to sell me toothpaste.

In the meantime, I'm going to go chew some gum outside a photo booth.

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Iconography of genocide

Why aren't the hammer and sickle symbols on people's T-shirts as bad as swastikas?

by Ford Walker

Walk into the trendy tourist T-shirt shops around town and you'll be sure to find a variety of icons adorning the shirt. Recently the hammer and sickle emblem has become common in these shops.

Symbolizing the proletariat of communist Russia, the hammer and sickle was prevalent on national Soviet flags. It represented both industry and agriculture, gained favour amongst the poorest workforce during the Russian revolution, and came to signify the foundation of Soviet society, that of the proletariat class. It is also a strong symbol of communism, leftist thought and anti-American sentiment. Therefore, it seems like a perfectly good icon to patch onto your backpack or to wear on a T-shirt, right?

The problem surrounding the hammer and sickle is that it represents the actions of Soviet society. During the "Great Purge" and the gulag of the '30s, the Soviets killed between eight and 11 million of their own people, either through execution or through forced exile to Siberia. This atrocity overshadows even the genocide committed by the Nazis of Germany, whose death toll reached four million. In essence, wearing the hammer and sickle can be viewed as wearing a swastika, since both symbols have become infamous as representing societies that carried out mass atrocities.

Of course, that statement is rather controversial. After all, the genocide of the Nazis was mostly a racial genocide, while the atrocity committed by the Soviets was a political one. However, the Nazi genocide wasn't entirely racial, and many political prisoners such as Communists were also forced into concentration camps. Since the Soviets didn't discriminate on the basis of race and instead were mostly concerned with political views, we technically cannot call it genocide, which is defined as a mass killing based on ethnicity. Still, the great purge is an atrocious and inauspicious moment in the bloody history of humanity, and Soviet symbols shouldn't become a celebrated icon in our society.

Interestingly, the swastika and the hammer and sickle have been seen in almost every culture all over the world. The Nazis specifically stole their symbol from Astika philosophy (more commonly known as Hinduism) but reversed the direction in which it points. What was once a symbol of great culture and religion is now reviled as a symbol of genocide and one of the darkest periods of modern humanity. The same can be said about the hammer and sickle. What now is associated with oppression and the Cold War, not to mention the atrocities committed by Stalin, was once a symbol of a free working class.

So why do people associate themselves with such a dark period of humanity? Is it through sheer ignorance that they make this decision, or is it simply the case that they choose to ignore the truth? One thing is for sure, if people were to replace the hammer and sickle symbol on their T-shirts with swastikas, there would be a gigantic public outcry. Still, it would seem that wearing the hammer and sickle would be the equivalent of wearing a Khmer Rouge symbol, or wearing the colours of the Rwandan Tutsis or a Sudanese Janjawi symbol.

Of course, I am one for freedom of speech. Wear what you choose to wear. I'm merely reminding you that the symbols you become associated with might seriously offend people. I doubt that the hammer and sickle will ever become as infamous as the swastika, but that doesn't mean it should be worn.

Poop happens—even in Victoria

'Victoria is the most environmentally harmful city in Canada when it comes to sewage'

by Kevin Nakanishi

On most sunny days, the UVic fountain is a pleasant hangout for students to lounge on benches and kick hacky-sacks around. However on one November day, my colleague and I made asses of ourselves to educate Victorians on the lack of sewage treatment here in the Capital Region District (CRD).

I found myself bare-assed, squatting over the fountain's edge, with my pants pooled around my ankles. To my left, Chris Willey dumped a bucket of radioactive waste directly into the fountain's uppermost pool. Below me, a brown, coil-shaped mass floated lazily on the water. It was fake poop. Even the ducks seemed disgusted.

But a little fake poop doesn't seem like such a big deal when you look at Victoria's sewage system. While cities like Calgary use chlorine and ultraviolet light to treat their sewage, Victoria merely filters its sewage with a metal screen. The screen removes objects larger than six millimetres, and the remaining waste (and water) is dumped less than two kilometres from shore. Victoria is the most environmentally harmful city in Canada when it comes to sewage.

These screens fail to eliminate any industrial and household chemicals that we flush down the drain, and substantial quantities of oil, grease, copper, cyanide and lead are dumped into the ocean. According to the Sierra Legal Defence Fund, Victoria dumps approximately 34 billion litres of untreated sewage into the ocean annually—that's three times more than Toronto.

In 2000, the CRD released the latest version of their Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP). However, the plan makes no commitment to improve sewage treatment for the next 25 years. Instead, the LWMP relies on a trigger process that waits until toxin levels exceed certain "warning levels" before taking action.

If you don't like the sound of that, you aren't alone. In 2003, former minister of Water, Land and Air Protection Joyce Murray defined the trigger process as "contrary to the direction provided to [the CRD] by past ministers." Environment Canada refuses to endorse the trigger process because it violates the 1985 Fisheries Act. The federal government could deal out million-dollar fines and three-year prison sentences to the CRD. But this has yet to happen.

In November 2004, the CRD trunk sewer committee approved the creation of an independent panel to review and improve the LWMP. David Cubberly, the chair of the CRD environment committee, told the *Times Colonist* that the panel "could look at new solutions . . . and make recommendations." Unfortunately, as the Pacific Ocean continues to deteriorate, this panel still lacks appointees, a budget and, most importantly, a timeline.

People were disgusted when I pretended to defecate into the UVic fountain. But to me, the truly disgusting thing is that under the CRD's current practices, there is very little difference between flushing a toilet and pooing in tidal pools at Willows Beach.

According to the *Times Colonist*, the forthcoming CRD panel "will be asked to accept submissions from the public." But why wait for the CRD to take action? I invite you to contact the CRD's David Cubberly, chair@crd.bc.ca and tell him what you think about the situation. It's time to stop using the Pacific Ocean as our municipal outhouse.

Download the full No Poo Day report on our website, www.funplay.net/sewage.pdf

PM shows he's not Bush's lapdog

'Canada will not help finance the multi-billion-dollar U.S. ballistic missile defense shield'

by Michelle Martin

Poor Paul Martin never had much pizzazz. Maybe it was because George W. Bush was stealing the political spotlight with his wartime rhetoric and flashy campaigning. But looking back, I realize that if I had paid a little more attention to our prime minister, maybe I would have noticed that he really isn't that bad of a leader.

In fact, in a recent interview on *Global National*, Martin proved to be a thoughtful and vigilant decision-maker for our nation. Not, as I had feared, Bush's lapdog. If the character of a country were reflected by the qualities of its leader, then Canada's not doing all that badly. I think Martin's cautious manner is far superior to Bush's glitz, glamour and superficial qualities.

When Martin said that Canada would not help finance the multi-billion-dollar U.S. ballistic missile defence shield and would not allow Washington to station rockets on Canadian soil, he became the voice of our nation.

I had assumed that Martin's Canadian policies would mesh closely with those of the "world policeman" to our south when it came to the security of our nation.

Not only are we intrinsically economically, politically and culturally linked, but Canada and the United States are still part of the 46-year-old NORAD where we share the defence of our aerospace.

However, Martin did not bow to pressure from Bush and chose to scrutinize the component parts of the missile defence plan. Although Martin's statements were made in his usual modest manner, they were especially bold, considering less than a month earlier Bush had appealed to Canada to join his continental defence plan in his keynote speech in Halifax during his first official visit to Canada.

During the interview, Martin also echoed his campaign trail position stating that Canada would not support the weaponization of space (some U.S. military planners consider space to be the next battlefield). He continues to seek assurances from the United States that the weaponization of space is not part of the missile defence shield plan.

When it comes to missile defence, polls show that Martin's statements seem to reflect the voice our nation. Over 70 per cent of Canadians do not support the weaponization of space, and a slim majority of 52 per cent does not want Canada to join the missile defence plan. Critics, such as the Canadian Peace Alliance, claim it would provoke nuclear proliferation sparking a new arms race, put weapons in space, expand U.S. militarism and increase military spending. It is apparent from Martin's apprehensions that he is proceeding with extreme caution—a smart move considering the nation's voice isn't all that clear.

Some may call it a display of indecision when Martin did not rule out Canada's participation in the plan. But considering the depth and complex nature of this decision, I call it a display of intelligence. "The decision as to whether or not we participate in the ballistic missile defence system is going to depend on whether, in fact, Canada can have a voice in the structure," said Martin. And since the missile defence plan will proceed with or without Canada's support, Martin's position at this time makes good sense.

Personally, I hope Canada would have a voice if a missile were to be shot down over Canadian soil.

The missile defence issue wasn't the only controversial topic Martin discussed at the year-end interview. When Martin was reminded that Canada opened its door to draft dodgers during the Vietnam War, he indicated that Canada was prepared to accept U.S. citizens who do not want to serve in the war in Iraq.

"In terms of immigration, we are a country of immigrants and we will take immigrants from around the world. I'm not going to discriminate," said Martin.

Although mild and moderate, Martin seems on the right track here. We are not a flashy nation, and we don't need a glitzy leader. However, we do need a smart one. At least Martin is intelligent enough to realize that even though Canada is a relatively minor player in international affairs, decision-making still needs to reflect the autonomous voice of its nation. And to that I say kudos to Mr. Martin.

The slacker's guide to academic succes

And a guide to identifying slackers

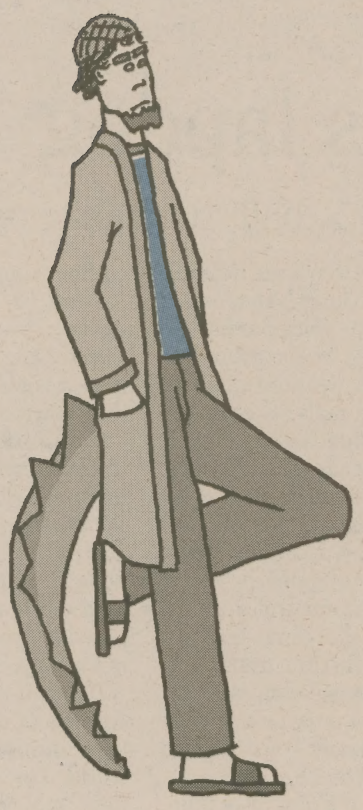
by Mark Noble, *The Arthur*

PETERBOROUGH, Ont. (CUP) — The bell has rung, and ladies and gentlemen, we find ourselves inside another surreal semester of university life. If you're anything like me—what I would refer to as a terminal slacker—I welcome you to the topside down ranks of slackers everywhere.

What is a slacker? My definition is someone who wants to succeed, and has every intention of doing so, but due to the mitigating circumstances of life and a combination of counterproductive personality traits, they rarely meet the goals they set out. Slackers are an academic disaster waiting to happen when they are free for the first time from the fetters of counterproduction (parents). They are about as safe as a mouse finding refuge in a barbecue.

In my second year of university, a combination of personal problems and a strong slacker mentality helped me achieve a cumulative average of seven per cent. It's a mark so low that when I tell people they gasp in awe at a truly remarkable accomplishment of futility. I am by no means proud about this. I was forced to redo my year after a stressful academic appeal, and have since seen the majority of my friends graduate and move on with their lives.

It was, nevertheless, an instructive experience. I was able to determine with a degree of certainty that university was where I wanted to be, and with my personal troubles seemingly behind me, I was able to develop some strategies that have allowed me to go from the doghouse to the honour roll.



The difference between an A and an F (well, a B- anyways)

1 A straight flush should always beat a well-bluffed pair

University is a game of poker. There is skill, there is some luck, and there is always plenty of BS to go around. In poker, you want to have the best hand possible rather than play the game by the seat of your britches. School is the same. Those who have the self-discipline to develop good time management skills, work hard and avoid indulging in distractions will ensure they start off with a better set of cards. If you are serious about this, I suggest you go to your university's library or academic skills centre and check out their resources.

2 A PhD does count for something

The best resource available to a student is their instructor. Whatever you're working on, your instructors can point you in the right direction on a project, reducing your time in organizing and developing it. Take advantage of their knowledge and expertise.

3 Plagiarism is not a good form of flattery

Imitation, however, is. The difference? One is like pretending to be someone else. The other is more like a tribute to the greatness of someone else. No matter how tired, lazy or bored you are, do not try to pass off someone else's work as your own. If you are desperate, pass off their work with vigorous acknowledgement of their contribution. Very little in this world is original, and the chances of you coming up with the latest theory that will change life as we know it are fairly slim. Try to use one to three central articles as a template, and then utilize your other sources for brief quotes and statistics (provided you're not relying on the *Toronto Sun* as your main reference). You may not have created the original argument yourself, but you can write an essay that is completely original in scope and concept—although you will have to put in the work to make that happen.

4 Two out of three ain't so bad

One can be okay too. Seminars can be daunting, especially if you haven't done the readings. There is absolutely no reason why you shouldn't be able to read at least one article, unless you are really lazy. If you are, fair enough, but you get no sympathy from me. You usually have two or three readings in a class. You might as well do one. It's probably no more than 20 pages, especially if you're in first year. During the seminar keep quiet until you can say something about the article you did read. Listen to what others have to say, pick up on some key themes of the discussion and then relate it to the reading(s) you did do.

5 What if it's the same, but isn't

Occasionally you get people in your seminars who like to pontificate about abstract things that make little sense to you. Sometimes they are professors, but most of the time they are students who probably haven't done the readings or really don't understand them. I've never taken a class so esoteric that only the professor and one student had a handle on the material. If you have done your readings, don't get discouraged, stick to your guns and direct a question at Socrates that is related to the course material. Whether or not they trip on their tongue is irrelevant. You have shown you grasp the material, which equals participation marks.

6 Pajama party lecture

It's not that slackers don't like going to class—it's just that it's hard to get there. Still, one must endeavour to make it to the lecture. This pertains particularly to people in residence. When class is a five-minute walk from your room, there is no reason not be there, even if you're not conscious. Hedge your bets—even if you show up to your lecture in a nightgown, drooling, and fall asleep as soon as the lights dim, you're still learning more than if you stayed in bed. Dreams about sociological paradigms or development theories may be unsettling, but at least you've heard the terms. This works especially well in psychology, where you can do dream analysis to figure out what you learned.

7 54-40 or fight!

The golden rule of being a successful slacker is that you can never get worse than a zero. If you rely on this logic, you're probably not doing too well. Never skip doing an assignment—that's throwing away marks you could very well use. Not sure whether it's Groucho or Harpo that wrote the *Communist Manifesto*? Who cares! If you're down to the wire, write it down and hand it in anyway. Too many people take a zero on an assignment because they didn't do it or weren't happy with it. Pride is not an option—especially when procrastination has led you to the point of no return. Get a pot of coffee, get naked, do what you need to do to get words on the paper and hand it in. The bottom line is that you might get five out of 45 on an assignment, but hypothetically, that could be the difference between a 49 and a 50, credit or no credit.

Keep in mind that if you do the readings, show up to class and try to stay abreast of the course content, you won't be as big a mess as you think if you need to churn out something on the fly. I wouldn't bank on getting a smiley face stamp when your assignment gets returned, but there is a delightful irony in getting a C on what you know is crap.

So grasshopper, go hop half-assed into the world of academia and take comfort as you find yourself munching on a buffet of mediocrity. All joking aside, there are things beyond your control. University can be a daunting experience. If you find yourself sliding academically and suffering from feelings of depression, anxiety and despair, or are finding that you are increasingly becoming dependent on drugs or alcohol, you shouldn't have to face that alone. Seek guidance from a doctor or counsellor. University, while at times challenging, should not be a place where you suffer in silence.

A guide to identifying slackers

The subculture of slackers is full of all sort of different categories of individuals. A wide range of talents and personalities can be observed, although common to them all is a difficulty to translate these "unique" traits into academic success. Here is a list of just a few of the more common varieties of slackers. If you recognize yourself, or a friend, take heart: being a slacker is not a hopeless condition. It's just perplexing.

SS

The Lizard King

The most revered amongst all slackers, the lizard king (or queen), is your local grubby philosopher. Every residence section has one, a seemingly unclean, wandering intellectual who is never too busy to spend the better portion of an hour—or a day for that matter—imparting the mysteries of the cosmos to those willing to listen. After being awed by their ability to do an in-depth existentialist analysis of Archie comics, you ponder how one endowed with such infinite wisdom is not in graduate school or a secret government think tank. The reason for this is simple. Their kingdom is a tragic one. If they spent a fraction of the time doing schoolwork or writing down their thoughts as they do sermonizing apathetic first-years, they might be on the dean's list. Alas, the lizard kings are resigned to rule in their little corner of the common room or the cafeteria giving us the answers to the universe that most of us will never hear.

Habitat: Common rooms, cafeterias, bathroom stalls, buses and park benches. Never to be found in a seminar.

Notable successes: Jim Morrison, Steven Wright, Socrates and Wicked Witch of the East.

Key to success: Going to class and actually documenting their thoughts make lizard kings potent intellectual adversaries instead of weird guys in bathrobes.

Social Microsoft Butterfly

The Internet has allowed a new generation of slackers to emerge: the Microsoft social butterfly, or MSB for short. These slackers have managed to make the seemingly boring world of their bedrooms into a veritable 24-hour conference call of MSN contacts. When out of their natural environment and away from the computer, one can always tell an MSB by flashing the colour orange at them — they will immediately become excited at the prospect of a new unanswered electronic message. MSBs also enjoy verbalizing their feelings using witty acronyms. Devoid of any outward physical emotion, you can tell you've hit their funny bone when they inform you of an LOL. Still, one must always take care in verbalizing with an MSB, as hand gestures and facial movements can have catastrophic effects.

Habitat: MSBs leave their computers only to eat, but are now being spotted away from their computers more often due to the evolving technology of handheld communication.

Notable successes: The people who claim to have made a million dollars through Internet solicitation.

Key to success: Should write essays online in message format and then mail message history to professor. Learn to incorporate emoticons into the academic lexicon.

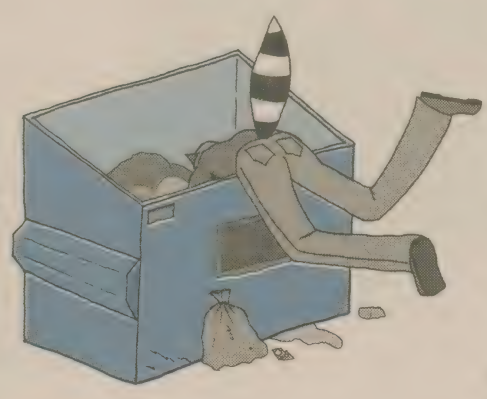
The Cyber Loner

AKA Max Payne/Tommy Vercetti/Naked Neighbour from *The Sims*/Laura Croft/Orcslayer69/etc., etc. The cyber loner is your resident gaming freak. You can hear at all times of the day the sound of repetitive MIDI music and gunshots from their dwelling. With bloodshot eyes and no muscular definition to speak of, the cyber loner can be seen quickly running to a restroom as the loading screen prompts the coming of another seven hours of virtual habitation. Cyber loners who have chosen to adorn catheters and VR glasses are only seen on those rare occasions where their chamber pot needs to be emptied.

Habitat: The sun-swept streets of 1980s' Vice City, The Black Mesa Complex and the fantasy world of Faerun.

Notable successes: They've all saved the world numerous times over. Seeing as they use the very latest in firearms and magical weapons, who's going to argue?

Key to success: Major in subjects where you can put to use your favourite gaming genre. For instance, first-person shooters should take sociology, and role-playing game fans should consider drama or medieval literature.



The Raccoon

Raccoons are nocturnal creatures and are very active when awake during the night. They have dark circles around their eyes, and spend most of the night eating garbage, mating and generally making a lot of unwarranted noise. Their human slacker counterparts enjoy doing the same. The night is the domain of the raccoon, and they enjoy the late-night hours with relish. Every residence has at least two who sleep during the day and emerge sometime after the cafeteria closes. Forced to scavenge for food, their fluorescent eye bulbs can be seen using a flashlight or car headlight as they scurry across streets in search of food and activity. Remember, raccoons are not lazy. They are very energetic and productive. It just happens to be during the most unproductive part of the day.

Habitat: Anywhere that is open 24 hours. Commonly can be seen egging each other on to dive into the dumpsters behind cafeterias.

Notable successes: Count Dracula, Batman and Paul Revere.

Key to success: Try to take courses that utilize WebCT. That way, instead of watching infomercials and low budget religious programming on TV, you can surf the web, reading class notes and doing online research. Remember, penicillin is not a pizza topping.

Rocky Balboa

Rocky Balboa was a fictional boxer whose greatest asset was his ability to block haymakers with his face. Slackers who follow in his tradition are those with a bizarre talent that allows them to be successful for very intense, short periods of time. They may be those individuals who write 5,000-word essays the night before they are due or carry a stolen keg across town. Regardless of their ability, they always find the fortitude to succeed where most mortals would fail. They are the type of slacker that can be seen time and time again showing tremendous stamina at eating, drinking or movie marathons, training themselves constantly to do the impossible, no matter how trivial it is. That's the deception. What many see as excessive laziness is actually a very old and ancient skill of prolonged concentration. While Rocky had chickens to chase and stairs to climb, his slacker brethren have the first two entire seasons of *Family Guy* on DVD and a $1,800 meal plan. When the time comes, they will be ready.

Habitat: Beer Store, Future Shop and their neighbour's bed. At the end of each term, they can be observed at the library doing the year's readings and writing a giant essay that covers the content of their entire course load. It is imperative they are not disturbed during these critical junctures.

Notable successes: The Italian Stallion himself, three-time heavyweight champion of the world, John Belushi, Babe Ruth, Homer Simpson and every hot dog eating champion ever.

Key to success: They are doing a pretty good job.

SACHA NARINE PHOTO

Maestra Tania Miller (second from right) with members of the Victoria Symphony outside UVic's Farquhar auditorium.

A Latin odyssey with the Victoria Symphony

by Sacha Narine

A hesitant laugh rippled through the audience when Mariachi del Sol took the stage in the Farquhar auditorium dressed in full mariachi garb—sequined black matador suits and enormous sombreros. On Friday, Jan. 7, the Victoria Symphony put on the first performance in its Odyssey series, entitled "Latin American Mariachi!"

Maestra Tania Miller, the symphony's conductor, provided a little between-song banter, making the performance feel more like a Tegan and Sara concert than a night at the symphony.

The evening started out on its highest note, a performance of Spanish composer Manuel de Falla's famous "Ritual Fire Dance" from his opera *El amor brujo*. Completed in 1915, the Fire Dance is a turbid and vigorous orchestral showpiece, serving perfectly to awaken a crowd of sleepy, cold Victorians.

Alexander Dunn, a guitar instructor in UVic's music department, took the stage with the orchestra to perform Heitor Villa-Lobos' "Bachianas Brasileiras no. 5." And so the lull began, as Dunn missed the odd note, strained a number of others and generally struggled to keep pace with the orchestra. It may have been stage fright, since Dunn's playing reawakened during the opening of Joaquin Rodrigo's "Concierto de Aranjuez," a remarkable 1940 guitar concerto. In fact, all of the night's music was composed in the 20th century. Modern Latin rhythms and festive mariachi gave the performance a kinetic depth restricted to this particular style of music.

While Dunn played well, Mariachi del Sol brought the evening's greatest energy. But first, the lull deepened. A purely orchestral performance of Alberto Ginastera's "Variaciones Concertantes op. 23" proved too sedate and occasionally awkward. A long bass solo had some audience members checking their watches. The mood of Ginastera's work felt disconnected from the rest of the night's music. A long work, the Variaciones twists a theme into 11 variations, beginning with cello and harp then moving through string pieces and various solos—clarinet, trumpet and trombone, the torpid bass solo—and ending with a nearly impressive rondo for full orchestra.

After the generally unimpressive Variaciones, the audience joyfully welcomed Mariachi del Sol, headed by singer/songwriter and guitarist Octavio Carrillo. With a powerful Mexican accent, Carrillo introduced the band's seven members after an energetic performance of Carrillo's "Lluvia," a song about rain, Mexico and beautiful British Columbia. Then came Jesus Cisneros's "Soy Mexico," a powerful and exciting mariachi anthem in which Carrillo proclaims, in Spanish, "My eyes are the oceans, rivers and lakes . . . I am Mexico. I am Mexico."

They finished the evening with a "Tribute to Pepe Guizar," one of Mexico's most popular composers. Arranged by Jose Martinez, the medley included "El Mariachi," "Sin Ti," and "Guadalajara." While the symphony played with Mariachi del Sol during some selections, the group often sounded better when not obscured by the orchestra's keening violins and tremulous cellos. Mariachi del Sol is a vibrant Mexican talent, and their inclusion in the night's performance was a blessing. After the concert, the group continued the festivities at a catered reception in the University Centre lobby. Mariachi echoed through the halls as the audience continued to pour out of the auditorium and find space in the lobby to snack and enjoy the exuberant sounds of Mexico.

As the first performance in the Victoria Symphony's Odyssey series, "Latin American Mariachi!" was quite a success. Tania Miller's conducting style is honest, lacking the affected passion that one comes to expect from conductors. Alexander Dunn's guitar wasn't as clean and professional as it could have been, but his playing during the Rodrigo concerto was still impressive.

Mariachi del Sol proved to me that if I'm ever given the option to either see live mariachi or a symphonic performance of Latin American music, I'll take the mariachi. The seven sequined musicians of Mariachi del Sol owned the show and most of the night's praise.

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Live album, simple and solid

The Dears
Thank You Good Night Sold Out
MapleMusic Recordings

by Sacha Narine

More than one year since their debut full-length album, *No Cities Left*, the Dears are back to smack you in the mouth (and ear) with smooth, plaintive musical expression. *Thank You Good Night Sold Out* is a live album, eight tracks and 66 minutes long, full of characteristic Dears' drama and wonder. If you're the sensitive type, prepare to whimper a little.

Murray A. Lightburn sings like a more masculine version of Thom Yorke. That's not to imply that Lightburn copies Yorke—the resemblance feels quite incidental, imparting a bit of unintentional nostalgia to Radiohead fans who yearn for the rocky simplicity of *The Bends* and the melancholic complexity of *OK Computer*.

The album's last two tracks reveal such a grand stylistic contrast that genres seem a thing of the past for the half hour it takes to listen to "Lost in the Plot" and "Pinned Together, Falling Apart." The former is perhaps the album's most conventional rock track but also one of the most affecting.

As a live album, *Thank You Good Night Sold Out* sounds clean, but a little stripped down—as you'd expect. It comes off too straightforward at first, but soon enough Lightburn's vocal sincerity and the dreamlike echoes of synth piano overlapping rising/falling guitar draw you in.

With Thank You Good Night Sold Out, the Dears have given listeners one eclectic, honest, sensual reason to see them live whenever we can.

Phantom of the Opera women steal the spotlight

by Greg Ursic, *the Ubyssey*

PROVIDED PHOTO

Gerard Butler and Emmy Rossum star in a new film adaptation of Gaston Leroux's classic novel.

VANCOUVER (CUP) — In the latest film depiction of *The Phantom of the Opera*, the new owners of the Paris Opera House are faced with a dilemma when Carlotta (Minnie Driver), their finicky diva, refuses to perform. Thankfully, Christine (Emmy Rossum), the resident understudy, is a vocal phenomenon. Her natural beauty catches the eye of Raoul (Patrick Wilson), the Opera House's young patron and her former love.

Their reunion is threatened by the Phantom (Gerald Butler), the disfigured genius that dwells in the catacombs beneath the Opera: after teaching Christine to sing, he is not prepared to give her up.

The stage version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom* has been seen by over 70 million people and has grossed roughly $2.5 billion to date, making it ripe for a film version. Indeed the original leads, Michael Crawford and Sarah Brightman, were signed to do the film in 1990, but the production fell into limbo. However, when *Moulin Rouge* and *Chicago* drew critical raves and big box office figures, the project was resurrected.

Director Joel Schumacher and Webber chose to cast virtual unknowns for the leads, with mixed results. Emmy Rossum, a classically trained singer, is radiant as Christine. She projects a delicate innocence and surprises with a clear voice that rings true. Driver, meanwhile, is wonderfully flamboyant as the inept diva, creating an amusing caricature both in the way she sings and in the way she carries herself. The male leads, however, tend towards unremarkable.

Despite months of voice training, it is evident that Butler is not a singer. While he manages the high notes, he sounds like he's growling and tends to fade out when he attempts the baritone. I was also surprised with his banal appearance—I expected a monster and got someone from a Clearasil commercial.

Wilson, a Broadway veteran, has a better voice, but whether it's because he acts too much like a dandy or because he lacks passion, there is something lacking in his performance. The film is sure pretty to look at, though.

The stages are spectacular both in scope and detail: from the marble stairways to the brocaded curtains, they exude opulence and grandeur. And the glorious chandelier, which, although it lacks the impact (or more appropriately near impact) that it did in the stage version, it is no less impressive. As befits any high-end opera, the costumes are outstanding, lush and eye-catching. Ultimately, however, the film will live or die by the score.

Webber's soundtrack is still vibrant after a decade. Though I'd be hard pressed to pick a favourite, Masquerade stands out in my mind: the combination of choreography, showy costumes and excellent delivery provides a visual and acoustic treat. Running a close second would be the piece where the Phantom delivers a series of ultimatums, which in turn inspires the film's most comical moments.

While I'm not a big fan of musicals—to quote *The Simpsons'* Mr. Burns, "I know what I hate, and I don't hate this"—I repeatedly found myself humming along with the numbers and was only occasionally bored. While the singing is not as polished as the play, it is nonetheless entertaining and will prove to be a pleasant rerun for most fans. And at one-fifth the ticket price, it's well worth the investment.

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Eve, reincarnated

PROVIDED IMAGE

by Frances Olimpo, *Excalibur*

TORONTO (CUP) — Despite what your parents may tell you, you were an accident.

This is just one of the many scientific and philosophical arguments suggested in *L'appétit d'Ève* (The Nature of Eve), a bilingual film by cultural journalist Fabienne Lips-Dumas.

Lips-Dumas investigates the origin of humankind as she struggles with her Judeo-Christian faith, which consumes her with overwhelming feelings of guilt and repression. As a result, she decides to forge a new direction in her life and leaves behind her familiar surroundings of religious icons to learn more about science—an unknown territory she is curious to explore.

The film makes many parallels through her "ravenous appetite" for knowledge, suggesting that Lips-Dumas is a modern-day Eve. In fact, she admits that as she moved "from one mystic passion to another," her identification with Eve's fallible humanity strengthened as she also lamented over the woman's role in the Fall of Man.

Lips-Dumas's quest for answers takes her around the globe, from a massive fossilized rock in Vancouver to an impressively wide range of American, British and French academic institutions (Brown, Cambridge and the Pasteur Institute, to name a few).

In these places, she interviews many reputable and engaging scientists who are equally enthusiastic about their evolutionary theories, as well as their religious beliefs, which may or may not have been affected by their discoveries.

Her film raises many relevant questions that examine the dichotomy of humanity (as the centre of the world) against nature (as the power that controls the survival of all species). As the film takes us to Western Canada's Burgess shale, the fossils that are uncovered show that there were millions of other potentially intelligent life forms other than Pikaia, our bacterial ancestor, that could have evolved as the dominant species in our place.

According to Stephen Jay Gould, an interviewee and the dedicatee of this film, we are ultimately a product of chance.

It is clear that Lips-Dumas engages in her subject matter with objectivity and sincerity, which is demonstrated in poignant scenes, such as her story of her parents' survival of the Holocaust.

The film shows many sweeping landscapes as she traverses from location to the next, as well as beautiful imagery taken from religious and classical art.

At the same time, Lips-Dumas attempts to diffuse the stiffness of the film's subject matter with whimsical humour—one scene involves a lengthy discussion about the complexity of a giraffe's penis. In addition, for those who do not enjoy subtitles, there is nothing to fear: she interviews both francophones and anglophones, so breaks are provided.

Her film is truly provocative in her final conclusions and will most likely renew a lively debate between Judeo-Christian and Darwinian followers. For these reasons and the questions that they inspire, Fabienne's *L'appétit d'Ève* (The Nature of Eve) is a temptation worth satisfying.

The queer side of coffee tables

The Queer Movie Poster Book
by Jenni Olson
Chronicle Books

by Stephanie Bowen

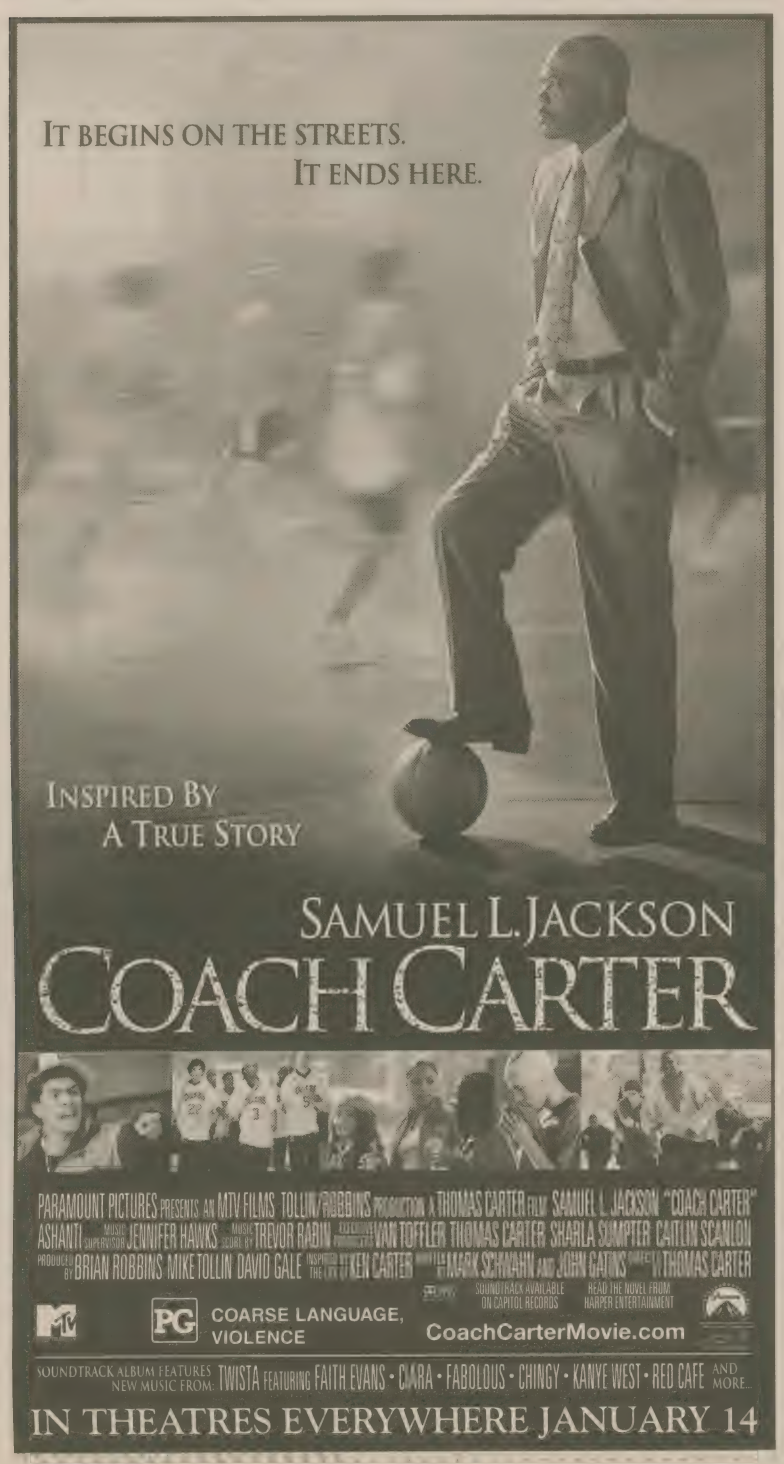
If *Leather Boys*, *The Fourth Sex* and *Saturday Night at the Baths* sound like interesting film titles, wait until you see their advertising strategies. Jenni Olson, one of the world's leading experts on GLBT (Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgendered) film, has compiled a cross-section of movie posters depicting queer themes, from as early as 1915. Noting similarities and recurring images in her introduction, she delves into promotional tactics used by big bad Hollywood, and even the adult film industry, to entice its target audience: the hetero masses.

The book is organized simply enough, chronicling queer film from decade to decade, noting both advancements and homophobic pitfalls. There are also several thematic chapters, such as "Queers of Colour," "Guys with Their Shirts Off" and "Dykesploitation," which note specific trends spanning decades.

"Dykesploitation," for instance, takes a look at a favourite topic in straight porn: girl-on-girl action. Olson includes campy, trashy posters from the '60s and '70s that provide some very guilty visual pleasure. The artwork and photography alone are blatant enough to be hilarious and, as Olson herself notes, "You've never seen so many exclamation points! . . . and ellipses . . . in your life!" A prime example is the tagline for The Fourth Sex, situated beneath a scantily clad beauty on her knees: "Is she... or isn't she?! Only her lover knows for sure!"

One cautionary note: buy *The Queer Movie Poster Book* for its images, not its text. Olson has selected oodles of sexy, fun and oftentimes startling ads, but her writing barely skims the surface of a complex issue, that of (mis)representation of homosexuality in the media. Her approach is lighthearted—she keeps the chatter to a minimum and lets the posters speak for themselves. Luckily, they have lots to say, making the oversized, glossy-paged volume a prime candidate for the coffee table.

Imagine—a conversation piece that actually starts a dialogue.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Music for cyborgs?

Turing Machine
Zwei
Frenchkiss

by Martin Hazelbower

Zwei, Turing Machine's second album, finds the band deep in fascination with the warped instrumental drive and pulse of krautrock, frequently evoking a more aggressive version of Tortoise. That band sprawled their icy sonics in contrasting directions, whereas Turing Machine is concerned with the architecture (or frequent lack thereof) of a single choppy groove.

They bolt layers of squalling drones and erratic fretboard squiggles atop some truly energetic rhythms—albeit rhythms less varied than might mesh with the constantly inventive melodies. This is an album mainly concerned with the primacy of the beat, and a willingness to move into less orthodox rhythms would highlight the band's innovation in a typically conservative genre.

Looking back, it's clear these seven songs (that might be one song, split arbitrarily) follow a clear road, but it's hard to predict the Machine's violent zigzag journey as it recompiles Sonic-Youth-y riff-scapes into shimmering lyrical abstractions and thunderous breaks. Since their principal tool here is repetition, they win points for knowing when and how to move things around—the arrangements circle and recede before moving in for the kill—and they are usually quick to find something else to kill before any single idea has been pounded lifeless. When *Zwei* finds its centre, simple melodic fragments achieve an anthemic glory and surety wholly different from the heart-string pyrotechnics of most current experimental/instrumental bands.

Turing Machine doesn't believe in crescendos. Here, building and releasing tension are understood as the same process, displaying a mastery of flow. It's like they're communicating at lightspeed across data cables linking their cortexes—but even if you're not a cyborg, you'll probably still get it.

PROVIDED PHOTO

"Seasoned" actor Micheal Keaton, a.k.a used-to-be-Batman, stars in this technological thriller.

A lot of poor reception

by Stephanie Bowen

How do the dead get a hold of the living? Why, they use the phone, of course. Cell phones, computers, televisions, radios and even that pesky ticking clock in your kitchen are in fact portals of communication to a realm beyond our own.

The latest in a line of technological thrillers (think *The Mothman Prophecies* and *The Ring*), *White Noise*, which opened in half-empty Canadian theatres on Jan. 7, explores Electronic Voice Phenomenon (EVP). According to the film, the spirit world can speak to us during technology's downtime, like the fuzz you hear between radio stations and on snowy television sets. Unfortunately, you cannot always control who you hear from.

An aged Michael Keaton plays Jonathan Rivers, an architect living the contemporary American dream, all of which disintegrates when his pregnant second wife Anna is found dead. Distraught and prone to obsession, Jonathan visits pseudo-psychic Raymond Price, who claims to have been contacted by Anna. As Jonathan listens, we get the impression that EVP is not strictly lovey-dovey messages from the other side. Anna's pained voice fades to some particularly nasty threats uttered in particularly nasty male voices. Raymond rushes back into the room, explains that there are "those who seek to harm," but assures Jonathan that a simple push of the delete key is all it takes to escape them. It doesn't take a psychic to figure out what comes next.

An intriguing concept, *White Noise* regrettably falls back on the most predictable of formulas, opting for cheesy horror over true psychological suspense and terror. The film goes for cheap scares of the monster-in-the-closet variety without delving deeply enough into actual spiritual science. Hundreds of thousands of believers all over the world claim to have heard messages on their various gadgets, prompting the formation of the American Association of EVP in 1982. Even Thomas Edison, inventor of the electric light, motion picture camera and phonograph believed that a delicate enough machine could detect and record the spirit world, and strove to create one until his dying day. These facts are enough to frighten and fascinate without high-budget Hollywood tricks. Presenting something like EVP in the mainstream horror genre lessens its believability and, ultimately, its fright factor.

White Noise does manage to explain that among spirits, like people, there are going to be some bad eggs. The film's conclusion is a whirlwind of all things evil, invoking everything from serial killing to demonic possession. While the potential creepy factor is high, the film completely misses the opportunity to point out what's really quite terrifying: the fact that technology has so inundated our lives that we even rely on it from beyond the grave. Jonathan Rivers receiving a call on his cell phone from his dead wife is both chilling and comical. I imagined a cell phone commercial spouting the importance of a clear connection. Though the plot is ripe for social comment, the filmmakers seem to have decided on a less abrasive format.

Horror buffs will be disappointed at the lack of originality, clairvoyants will dislike the implication that anyone can do their job, EVP researchers will disagree with the overblown representation of their science, and gullible pansies like me will take the TV out of their bedrooms. Overall, *White Noise* amounts to a lot of poor reception.

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Coo-coo clock on acid

What: *The Black Rider: The Casting of the Magic Bullets*
Where: Victoria Conservatory of Music (907 Pandora)
When: Jan. 18-20, 9 p.m.
How Much: $15

by Andrea Dupuis

Published in the early 1800s, *Der Freischutz* ("Free-Shooter") is based on a German folk tale about a clerk who falls in love with the royal huntsman's daughter and makes a deal with the devil for bullets that never miss their mark.

November Theatre brings its offbeat production of *The Black Rider: The Casting of the Magic Bullets* to Victoria on the final stop of its western Canadian tour.

Michael Scholar Jr., the artistic producer and actor who plays the devil (a.k.a. Peg-Leg), says for audiences to expect "a demonic coo-coo clock on acid."

The original folk tale was the basis for Carl Maria von Weber's 19th-century opera that deviated from the original story with its happy ending.

In 1990, theatrical innovators Robert Wilson, Tom Waits and William S. Burroughs got together to retell the story and develop an expressionist operetta. "[Wilson] wanted to retell the story with the original dark ending," says Scholar, "so he got Tom Waits for the music and Burroughs for the libretto."

November Theatre, originally from Edmonton, was the first company to produce the play in English. They bought the rights in 1998 and held the world English premiere of *The Black Rider* at the Edmonton International Fringe Festival. They have since been touring the fringe festival circuit. The production has received tremendous critical acclaim and played to sold-out houses.

"It appeals to everyone from young rockers to old opera heads," says Scholar.

He also recommends that theatre-goers buy tickets early.

Where's the love?

Love
by Toni Morrison
Random House

by Dave Jaffey, *The Gleaner*

VANCOUVER (CUP) — "I can't read novels by Toni Morrison," says Doreen, a Vancouver-area library worker. "They're so hard to read because there's so much suffering in them."

Morrison's novels are full of violence, murder, shootings and even lynching, but Morrison only tells the true stories of African Americans and how whites inflict pain and suffering on these brothers and sisters.

However, readers can also find it hard to slog through this Nobel Prize winner's books for a second reason: Morrison often tells her stories through flashbacks, the perspectives of four or five characters, and various points of view.

Morrison doesn't tell a story in a simple way—one event doesn't follow another—and the reader is forced to read forwards, backwards and even sideways.

In addition, the new novel, *Love*, doesn't differ from most of Morrison's other novels—once again, African Americans confront each other. Here they worship and love Bill Casey, a now-dead hotel owner, living in the northeastern United States. Once again, an event in the 1960s, recalled by one character, is followed by another character's memories of the 1940s.

In the end, though, it's really a simple story that Morrison unpacks. Six women named May, Head, Junior, L., Vida and Christine recall Bill Casey and the magic he brought into their lives.

In their daily lives, throughout the 1940s and '50s, some black Americans worshipped Casey and his waterfront hotel while they fought and suffered. "Otis Rick," writes Morrison, "had loosened a child's eye on the playground and had not understood or obeyed the expelled notice stuck on his shirt pocket."

He returned to school, she points out, with "his victims' dried blood still on his sleeves."

Or when Casey pops into someone's mind, she "remembers him telling her about some child who fell down in horse manure running after a posse and how the white folks laughed."

"So cruel," she concludes about white people, "enjoying themselves at murder."

Morrison scatters these callous stories throughout *Love*. But she's also rewriting history, as many African Americans recall the years before the 1960s as hellish. In those years of the 1950s or before, whites often attacked black people, denied them entry to bathrooms, schools, restaurants and many other public places. Whites Only signs appeared at many doors and voting booths.

Yet in *Love*, Morrison says in effect: Sure these were tough times, but they weren't all bad.

And whatever you think of *Love*, you can't find too much love in this story.

Morrison deserved her 1993 Nobel Prize in literature. She has written some fine novels. But Doreen, the library worker is right—Toni Morrison's books are not for everyone.

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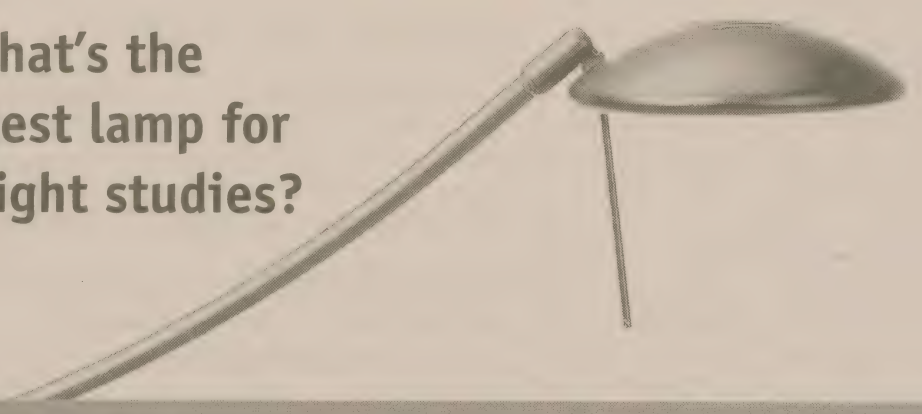

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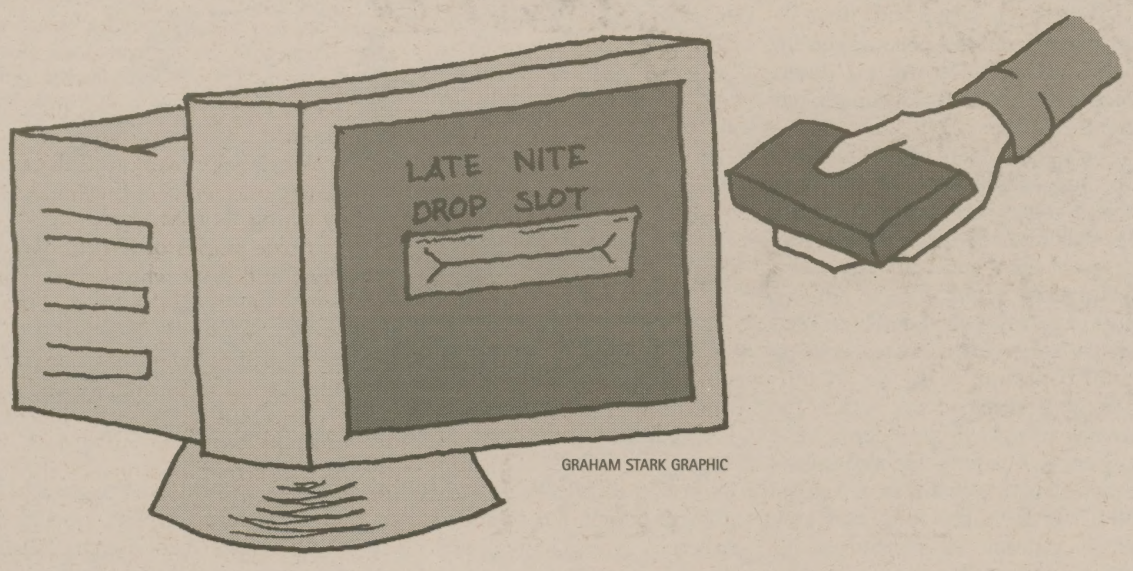
BASICS

The end of the video store

New services thrive while the traditional video store tries to keep up

by Sean Patrick Sullivan



GRAHAM STARK GRAPHIC

It was the introduction of the VHS player that revolutionized the way people watched movies in their homes. Movie fans didn't have to wait for a theatre to replay an older movie. Instead, for a few dollars they could rent and enjoy a movie while snacking on popcorn in their living room. It was groundbreaking.

Now it's convenience that is changing the way we watch movies in our home, as the Internet, online DVD rentals and ATM-like rental kiosks show that you no longer have to visit the video store—or even talk to a real person—to get movies.

The cheapest is the Internet. Near-DVD quality copies of new releases *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* and *The Aviator* were available on the Internet only days after their theatrical releases. Practically any older movie can be found in a matter of minutes through BitTorrent websites.

BitTorrent is the latest and most effective way to transfer large files over the Internet. Rather than having files stored on a central server, downloaders use "torrent" files to connect directly to each other, trading files (like pirated movies, for example) quickly and efficiently.

The Motion Picture Association of America cracked down last year on websites that hosted links to these torrent files, briefly crippling the flow of movies for the average BitTorrent user. Within a few days, though, copycat sites popped up to fill the void, and the downloading continued. Experts estimate that one third of all traffic on the Internet is file-sharing on the BitTorrent network.

Because of the way BitTorrent technology works—the more people downloading a file, the faster it transfers—getting a new release on your computer can be done in as little as an hour or two. Most are compressed enough to fit on one blank CD. It's fast, easy and free. It's also illegal.

Most people don't want to watch movies on a computer monitor, though, and few have the technical know-how to hook their PC up to a TV. So, in the spirit of legal convenience, retailers are now rolling out automated DVD rental kiosks in grocery stores and fast food restaurants across the country.

The kiosks, which take up about five square feet of floor space, look like ATMs, with a screen at the top to play movie trailers and a body that holds anywhere between 100 and 400 DVDs. They're simple to use: customers swipe a credit card, choose the movie they want, and out pops a DVD. To return the movie, swipe again and push the disc into the "return" slot.

The downfall is that these machines will generally only carry new releases, meaning consumers won't be flocking to the kiosks for all of their rental needs. For retailers, though, they're a tremendous boon, eliminating the cost of running a rental store while retaining much of the revenue (about 80 per cent of video store rentals are new releases). McDonald's is installing kiosks in its restaurants across the United States, major chains like Safeway have been adding them, and the downtown Market on Yates put one in last fall.

Even though the kiosks or downloading will not upend the traditional video store, online DVD rentals might. Online DVD rental sites are the new battleground for retailers—in the United States, Netflix is the largest and most popular, with 2.5 million subscribers and 30,000 titles. Wal-Mart and Blockbuster both offer the service as well, with Amazon.com expected to join the fray later this year. Here in Canada, the biggest and most popular is the Ottawa-based Zip.ca.

Zip.ca boasts 25,000 titles, ranging from the most obscure arthouse flicks to Hollywood blockbusters, as well as a mostly complete library of TV shows on DVD. Users make a list of DVDs they would like from Zip.ca's extensive catalogue, and movies are sent via express mail, usually arriving in two or three days. For about $25 per month, Zip.ca allows customers to have four DVDs out at a time and exchange them for new available movies as often as they would like. When one is returned (in a prepaid express mail envelope) to Zip.ca's headquarters, another is sent out.

Closer to home is VHQOnline, which is based out of British Columbia and reportedly offers much faster service than Zip.ca.

The selling point for online DVD rental services is an effective one: no late fees and no deadlines. Users can keep a movie for as long as they want with no penalties, an idea that Blockbuster is now adopting for its rental stores.

Starting sometime this spring, the rental giant will be dropping all late fees on movies and video games. Unlike the online sites, there will still be a due date, but customers will be given a one-week grace period in which they can return the product. If it isn't returned after one week, the customer is charged the full price for the DVD and gets to keep it. If the customer chooses not to keep the item, it can be returned within 30 days for a credit, and they're charged a restocking fee of a few dollars.

It's a desperate attempt to keep up with online services, as Blockbuster forgoes the hundreds of millions of dollars it makes each year from late fees. They and other retailers are feeling the effects of this convenience—the downloading, self-service kiosks and online services, perhaps signalling the beginning of the end for video rental stores.

Background music for an unremarkable Monday afternoon

Boy
Every Page You Turn
MapleMusic Recordings

by Sacha Narine

Sloan makes me sleepy. Boy sounds a little like Sloan with some added retro kitsch. Boy makes me a little sleepy too.

"Same Old Song," the first single from *Every Page You Turn*, verges on snooze inducing, yet manages to dance around banality and come to rest in the realm of okayness. The title track, "Every Page You Turn," does more for me with its formulaic catchiness.

Still, pared-down, simplistic albums like this one are growing tiresome.

The Strokes both fucked over and helped the music world by convincing us that exciting and contrived is bad, and lazy and honest is good.

Maybe that has to do with pop-culture irony—our increasingly jaded and detached outlook on our own lives.

Boy's new stuff is the kind of music you can listen to while doing homework or lifting weights or writing an epic poem full of epithets and morality.

A one-man band, Stephen Kozmeniuk wrote and recorded Boy's 2003 debut, exploiting the limited power of Pro Tools to create a smooth-sounding low-rent disc. Kozmeniuk's near-exclusive songwriting leads to a kind of monotony that finally breaks in the album's last two songs, "The Shells" and "Stars."

The first was co-written with guitarist Rolla Olak.

Every Page You Turn could use a few more notes, and Stephen Kozmeniuk could use a few more collaborators.

Here it is: background music for an unremarkable Monday afternoon.

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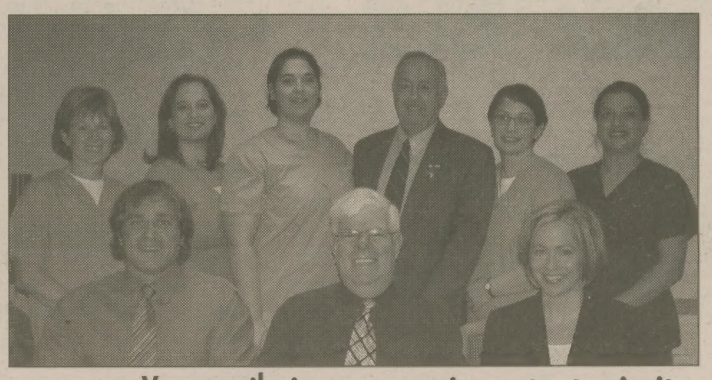

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NHL stars need salary cap

Rising salaries could mean the end of the small market team

by Ian Cooper

Astute readers of *the Martlet* would have read the article "Big money stars don't raise ticket prices" in last week's issue. The statement is false. However, the argument that the writer makes is valid.

The big money players in the NHL need a salary cap for two reasons.

First, big money stars do raise ticket prices. Owners do not hike ticket prices to pay for the new, expensive A-list players. They increase the ticket price because the better players draw greater crowds.

The owners increase ticket prices to make more money and afford better players. For instance, say the Canucks sell 20,000 tickets a game then sign Patrick Roy, raising ticket sales to 22,000, the owners can then decide to increase the ticket price. It is simple economics: if supply is constant, and you increase the demand, then the cost of a ticket will go up.

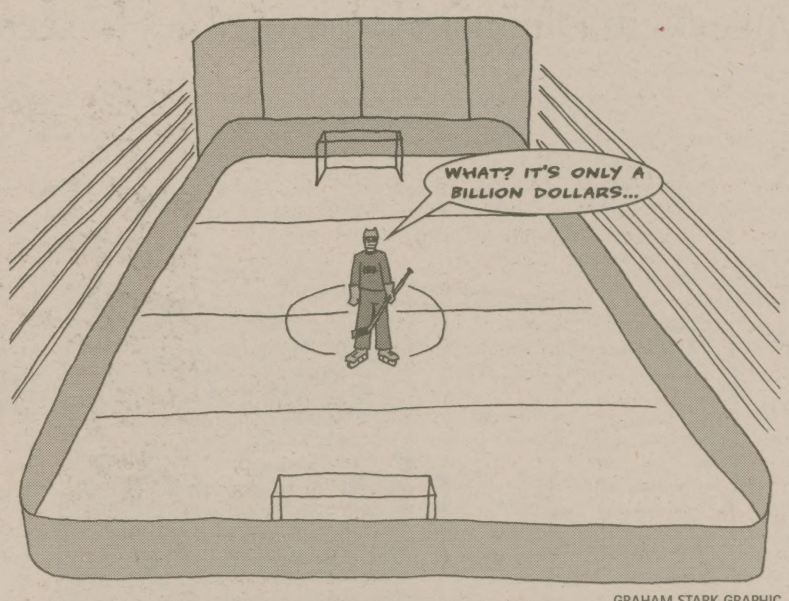
Why is it bad for the Canucks to sign Patrick Roy for $15 million in order to increase their fan support? It is bad because hockey fans will only spend so much money.

When Roy's salary and other A-list players' salaries become too inflated, ticket sales will go down. People are not always willing to pay greater prices.

The larger franchises, like the Toronto Maple Leafs or the New York Rangers, are able to pay players ridiculous sums of money because of their huge fan bases. Unfortunately, many of the smaller, poorer teams won't be able to keep up with the costs and will end up going bankrupt.

Gary Bettman knows that the smaller teams will go under just like any other business. He also knows that he has to view the health of the NHL through the long run as a whole and not just quarterly at the individual team level.

My second point deals with the smaller market teams. If there is no salary cap, then these teams will not even be able to buy, let alone sustain, big name players. They will not be able to get the talent necessary to win games and make people interested in hockey. If teams cannot get people out to fill their respective arenas, they will close down.



GRAHAM STARK GRAPHIC

If the demand increases, then the cost of tickets will rise.

If small market teams go bankrupt, then we could never again witness magical Stanley Cup runs like that of the Calgary Flames last year (yes, Calgary is a relatively small team, don't deny it!).

Only the top grossing three or four teams will even make it to the final. If that happens, hockey will suffer from Major League Baseball syndrome . . . it was the New York Yankees versus who in the past three World Championships?

It is for these two reasons that professional hockey is locked out. Whether it is $10 million or $8 million, hockey players will still be paid very well to play their game.

Wacky NFL Wild Card weekend

Divisional playoffs are set to go this weekend

by Mike Berry

With the Wild Card games over, the NFL progresses ever closer to SuperBowl XXXIX. Divisional playoffs are set to begin this weekend.

AFC

For the second straight year, the Indianapolis Colts defeated the Denver Broncos. Not only was it an easy victory for the Colts, defeating the Broncos 49–24, they also zoned in on a number of NFL records. The Colts' 49 points broke a team playoff scoring record.

Colts' quarterback Peyton Manning, this year's NFL Offensive Player of the Year, went 27 for 33 with 457 passing yards. It was the second largest yardage in NFL history. In the first half alone, he set an NFL record for throwing 360 yards with three touchdown passes.

His favourite target was receiver Reggie Wayne, who garnered 221 yards in the game, the third most in NFL history.

The Colts prepare to face the New England Patriots, who are playing with a worn down secondary—not the greatest defence against the seemingly unstoppable Colts offense.

In the other AFC Wild Card game, the New York Jets squeaked by the San Diego Chargers 20–17 in overtime to advance against the Pittsburg Steelers. It was a dramatic playoff victory and the Jets' first in 22 years.

The game seemed over in regulation when the Chargers failed to connect on a fourth-down pass in the end zone with just seconds remaining. But Jets linebacker Eric Barton was penalized for roughing-the-passer, giving the Chargers another chance. With 11 seconds to go, the Chargers capitalized from the one-yard line, forcing the game into overtime.

In overtime, Barton's penalty came back to haunt him as the Chargers were set to take the game with a 40-yard field goal attempt. But San Diego rookie kicker Nate Keading missed wide right. With five seconds left, Jets kicker Doug Brien finished the game, easing Barton's nerves by successfully placing a 28-yarder.

It was an intense game that also resulted in a mysterious clash between the Jets' head coach Herman Edwards and running back coach Bishop Harris. Both coaches had to be restrained by the fullback Jerald Sowell.

NFC

The St. Louis Rams defeated the Seattle Seahawks 27–20 to move on and face the Atlanta Falcons, and the Minnesota Vikings defeated the Green Bay Packers 31–17 to advance against the Philadelphia Eagles.

The Rams became the first team in NFL history to advance in the playoffs and not have a winning record in the regular season. They finished the regular season 8–8.

Rams quarterback Marc Bulger threw for 313 yards and two touchdown passes. The winning touchdown came with two minutes remaining from 17 yards out.

Seattle had an opportunity to force overtime with seconds left in the game. They were fourth and four on the Rams' fifth-yard line, but Seahawks QB Matt Hasselbeck's pass zipped through the hands of Bobby Engram in the endzone, dashing any hope of a victory.

Though the Seahawks won the NFL West with a record of 9–7, they haven't made the playoffs since 1984.

The Minnesota Vikings joined the Rams in making history by becoming the second team with an 8–8 record to advance in the playoffs. They finished their regular season on a seven-game losing streak.

Vikings QB Daunte Culpepper was integral to the victory, throwing four touchdown passes, three of which came on the first three possessions. But even with their offence in proper working order, the Vikings got a lot of help from Packers' quarterback Brett Favre, who threw four interceptions.

Favre is currently deciding whether he wants to play again next year.

Missing the simpler times in sports

by Zurick Scherger, *the Projector*

WINNIPEG (CUP) — Lately, I have found myself wondering why I continue to be a sports fan.

When sports fans turn on one of the specialty channels to watch a game or highlights, we are inundated with images of men in suits growling at each other, of overpaid, narrow-minded athletes telling us that they have to think of their families, or of players climbing into the stands to fight with fans.

Who is there left to cheer for?

Do you want to believe that Barry Bonds has doubled his weight in the last 20 years without science? How can a guy like Kobe Bryant go from pinnacle to doghouse in such a short time? Have Todd Bertuzzi and Dany Heatley learned from their mistakes?

It's not as if sports was without its fill of controversy in the past. Kermit Washington broke Rudy Tomjanovich's face in 1977. Bobby Clarke chopped down Valery Kharlamov like a large Russian fir tree in '72. Both Wade Boggs and Steve Garvey had to own up to extramarital affairs during their illustrious baseball careers. And don't forget about O.J.

Before, when hearing the word "court," we thought of basketball. Now the word conjures up images of Kobe, Ron Artest, Dany Heatley and Todd Bertuzzi standing in front of a judge.

It was easy to get excited about games. Now we spend our time wondering about collective bargaining agreements, rule changes, poor officiating and contract holdouts.

With the media scrutiny and intense pressure applied to athletes today, it is easy to understand why some athletes feel they need to take extra measures to succeed.

We put them on a pedestal from the time they are very young. For most of them, it's all they know. How many times do you have to be told that you are great before you start believing the hype, requiring more adulation?

Moments of violence are forgotten over time, at least until somebody else does something stupid. Mistakes often fade away.

In the end, life goes on. I'll keep watching.

BASKETBALL UPDATE

by Gavin Day

It was a perfect return to action for the Vikes men's and women's basketball teams following the Christmas break. Both teams won their respective games over the Regina Cougars and the Brandon Bobcats.

The women defeated the Cougars Friday night 74–68 and on Saturday simply overpowered Brandon at 81–35. The men beat Regina on Friday with a score of 80–70 and just held on for a slight victory over Brandon, 62–59 on Saturday.

Women

It was the Jody Potts show Friday night against the Regina Cougars. The star guard dominated from beyond the three-point line, leading the Vikes with 32 points. The Cougars' effective rebounding helped them to a half-time lead, 31–29. But the second half was a different story. Jania Mynott took advantage of her six-foot frame, posting up underneath the basket and making several key offensive rebounds. She finished the night with 19 points, most of them coming from offensive rebounds. The Vikes' full-court press late in the game forced the Cougars into making countless turnovers, killing any chance of a comeback.

The women were also golden on Saturday night, proving too strong for their opponents from Brandon. The Vikes' attack came from all sides with four different players reaching double digits in scoring. Jennifer Diana and Jania Mynott both led the way with 16 and 15 points respectively. The game was all but over at the half, with the Vikes leading 39–15. With such a big lead, the Vikes rested their starters. But the women who came off the bench were equally as effective. Schuylah Merrick was impressive scoring 10 points, with three three-pointers.

The women are now 6-4 and will be hosting the first place Simon Fraser University Clan Friday night at 6:30 p.m. at McKinnon Gym.

Men

Vikes fans were out in full force Friday night to witness the men's 10-point victory against the Regina Cougars. The Vikes showed a well-rounded attack, with every Vikes player who saw action registering at least two points. Chris Trumpy shooting from the outside and Graeme Bollinger powering on the inside each provided 24 points for the win. Steve Moore blocked a crucial shot in the final few minutes, effectively killing any chance of a comeback for Regina.

With many vocal fans Saturday night, the game versus Brandon was much more intense. Vikes shooter Chris Trumpy placed himself in early foul trouble, picking up two personal fouls in the first 10 minutes. But Matt Kazanowski more than picked up the slack, scoring 11 first half points off the bench. The Vikes were in more foul trouble in the second half, picking up both a technical and an intentional foul. Though they led at the half 34–24, UVic's lead evaporated to three with 1:30 left. The Vikes could have finished the game early when they went to the free-throw line three times in the last minute, but they only made three of six shots.

Shaun Doherty left the game with three minutes to go after rolling his left ankle. He walked off without any aid but was showing a severe limp.

The first-place Vikes (8–2) play SFU Friday night, 8:15 p.m. at McKinnon Gym.

UNUSUAL SIDE OF SPORTS

When in Sweden, enjoy the sand

by Berkley Brady

There are elements of danger in every wilderness experience. Avalanches, rockslides, steep cliffs, pissed-off carnivores, food shortages, misaligned zippers and dirty water keep all voyagers on their toes. At least, those are some of the dangers adventurers face when they are not tripping on the coastline of southern Sweden.

There, when the taxi drops you off at a campsite that features two stores and a minigolf course, you've got to find your own adventure. You've actually got to look really, really hard for it.

Having packs loaded down by jugs of store-bought water, peanut butter, stinky cheese and rare brands of candy that are no longer sold in Canada, my friend Ryan and I decided to veer off the mulched trail that ran alongside the beach.

With the sky above us an ominous charcoal gray, the vacationing Swedes vanished into their camper vans. But Ryan and I continued to slice through the low-lying bushes and series of giant anthills. The dry ground crunched beneath our hiking boots. All traces of civilization disappeared behind the soaring Scots pine. Then . . . we hit the road.

We made camp in a sparse forest sandwiched between the road and the beach. With the rest of the afternoon to kill, we crossed over the path and explored the beach. That's when we discovered a steep and sandy bluff. It rose to about the height of a door above the beach with a delta of sand formed below it.

I can't remember if it was Ryan or me who first leaped off the bluff onto the mat of sand, but within minutes we had created a gymnastic event that would coincide with our own version of the summer Olympic games.

Ryan was the first performer off the bluff, executing an astounding 360 spin. I matched it. Handstands and 720s off the bluff followed.

The competition was getting intense, but I finally won with a move lifted from my junior high gym class: a full-handspring/round-off.

We persisted with events in triple jump, pole-vault and sprinting by drawing tracks in the sand and scouting for long, tall pieces of wood—really the only thing in the forest. Unfortunately I lost all of these events and left the site with both the honorary silver and bronze medals.

Mostly, I learned the value of creating your own Olympic games in random places. You can judge yourself and create your own unethical controversies. There are no pressures from assertive coaches, no garish uniforms and no need to actually train. And like the first modern Olympic games, which took place in Athens in 1896, one could always aspire for their own Olympics to become an international phenomenon.

I've already got a second competition booked for this August in Calgary, which includes sports such as sprinting, long-distance running, a balance duel and a dance element that features real hip-hop moves from a 1990s kids' dance tape. It's but another way to keep the Olympic torch burning.

B. BRADY PHOTO

Ryan Green soars to semi-Olympic glory, with a make-shift pole vault, on the stormy beaches of Sweden.

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VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Volunteers are Needed for Victoria's First Homeless Count on January 15, 2005 from Midnight to 6 a.m.. If you are available and can attend an orientation session on either Jan. 7 or 8 and a community dinner on Jan 10, 2005, please contact mclarke@coolaid.org

Canadians for Ethical Treatment of Food Animals are looking for members to take an active part in their organization. Our mission is "a stress-free life and a humane death for food animals." Contact L. Dymond at 388-5165 or littlerockstables@shaw.ca

Become a Volunteer this New Year!!
Give something back to your community this New Year, while having a great time doing it. Here at Recreation Intergration Victoria we facilitate active lifestyles for people with disabilities in recreational settings. By donating only 1-2 hours per week you can take advantage of an opportunity that has the potential to enrich both your life and the life of someone else! To get involved or for more information, please call Bryanna at 477-6314.

ON CAMPUS

PERCEPTIONS OF REALITY PUBLIC TALK—Buddhist Monk and International Teacher, Gen-la Samden Gyatso will teach on the True Nature of Reality - how our mind creates our world and has the potential to attain lasting happiness and inner peace Thurs. Jan 13th, 7-9 p.m. Cadboro Commons Bldg.UVICMcKenzie Rm.$12 general;$8 Student/Sr. 592-7164.
www.MeditateinVictoria.org

Victoria Jung Society Lecture
Bert Chase, Adam's Turning: On the Estrangement of the Masculine Archetype 7:30 pm. Jan. 14, 2005. David Strong Building C116. $10 members, $15 non-members.

The Native Plant Study Group
Project Manager, Paula Hesje will speak about the Gorge Restoration Project. Thurs. Jan. 20, 2005 at 7pm. UVic, MacLaurin Bldg, Rm D-116. Non member drop-in fee: $2

Looking for alternative sources of information on issues such as globalization, militarism, sustainable living, queer issues, racism and economics? Come to the VIPIRG library in SUB b122.

Pregnant? Explore the diversity of choices available to you. Contact holywild@uvic.ca for more info.

AGRICULTURAL DEVESTATION IN AFGHANISTAN!
Come check out a slide show and presentation by Afghanistan native Rasaq Qadirie with images from before, during, and after the war. 4:30p.m. Tuesday Jan. 18 at C103 David Strong Building. Admission by donation.

The UVic Pride Collective presents:
Rope Bondage 101 - Jan. 24 at 7:30p.m.
Rope Bondage 102 - Feb. 28 at 7:30p.m.
Partner required. $15 dollars a pair. Email UVic Pride at uvicpride@uvss.uvic.ca for further informatrion or to register.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Victoria Writers' Society will present the winners of their 2004 writing contest following a short AGM, on Wednesday, January 12, 2005, 7:15 p.m. at New Horizons Centre, 234 Menzies Street. Guests welcome.
www.victoriawriters.org

A Night of Live Music- Wimmin In Music presents the incredible Kristin Sweetland, Carrie Horachek, Glenna, and Katrina Kadoski. Friday, Jan. 14th. 7:30pm at the Solstice Cafe. 529 Pandora. All are welcome.

Attention Graduating Students: The Grad Class Executive needs your input for the Legacy Project! Email your submissions to legacy@fun-play-net

Join the UVic Chess Club
Come and learn to play chess or improve your game. Club meets every Tuesday evening from 6:30-10 in the HSD building room A260. Contact dejamer@hotmail.com for more info. and put "chess" in subject box. Hope to see you there.

MENTORS NEEDED
Mentor an elementary student 1 hr/week. Play games, sports, make crafts, read and cook. For more info. call Bonnie at Big Brothers Big Sisters 475-1117, ext. 46.

Salute to Vienne
Royal Theatre Jan. 16 at 2:30 p.m. and Jan. 17 at 8 p.m.. The Victoria Symphony presents *Midsummer Night's Dream*, featuring the Victoria Children's Choir and narrator Christopher Gaze. Timothy Vernon conducts. Tickets: $42, $32, $24.

World Religion Day
"Elimination of all types of prejudice"
Jan 16, 2-4 p.m.. Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre in the Galleon Rm., 1767 Island Hwy. Free Admission and Refreshments. Maxwell Dance Workshop Performance. for more info. call 882-9999 or 382-9998.

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YOU SHOULD BUY MY CAR! Super-fun 1986 VW Cabriolet convertible. White-on-white, 5-speed, new top, new tires, new timing belt, new wheel bearings and more! A great little convertible with NO LEAKS! Even has Hawaiian seat-covers! $3150 obo. 595-6149.

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Previously owned bicycles *overhauled and guaranteed * $50-$200 * Mountain, Road, cruisers, parts * Love, peace, bike grease. 418-8867, 25 Crease Ave.

HEY YOU!

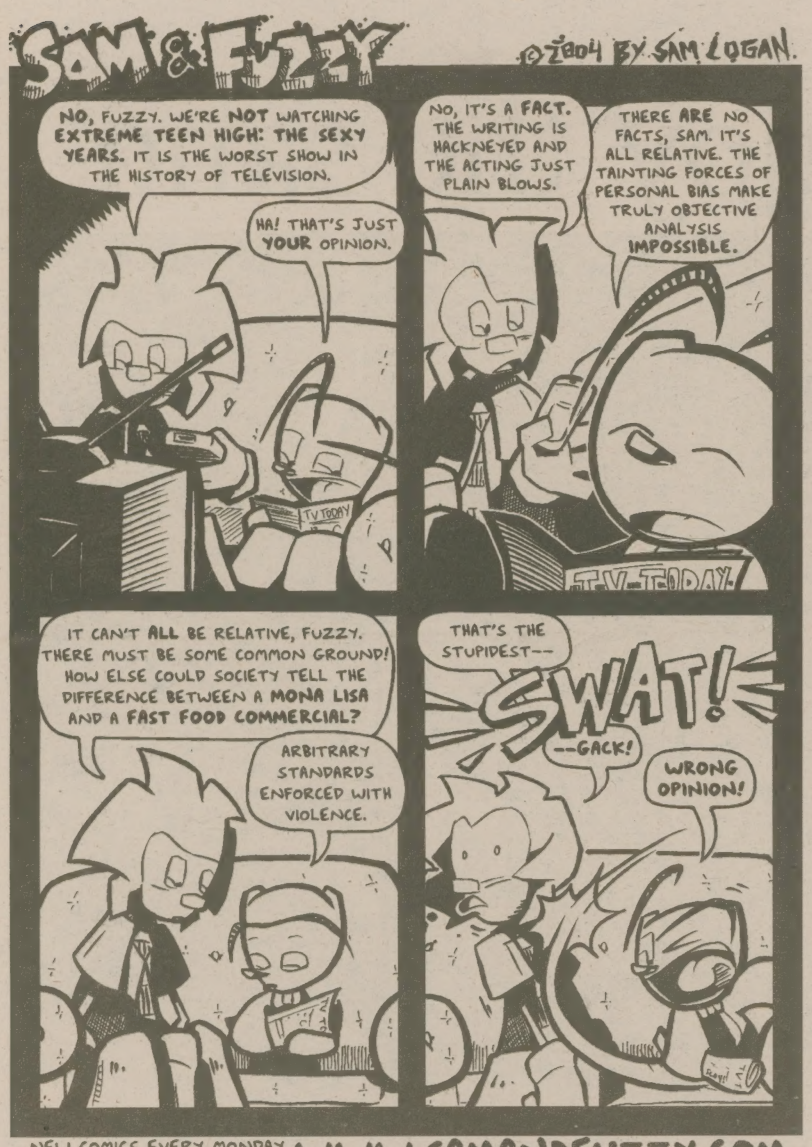
Hey Pod, please don't be angry that your free will is no longer your own— Voldo, your puppet master.

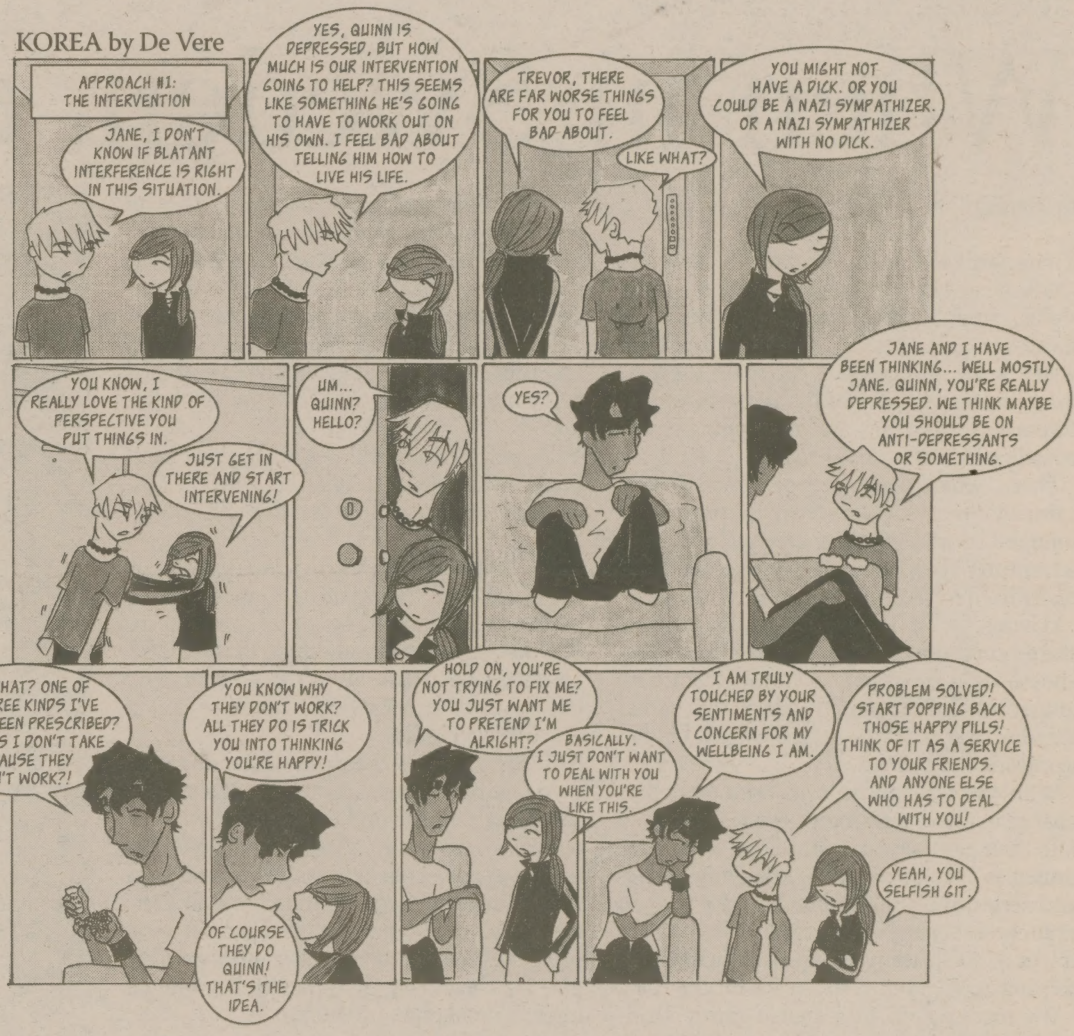
This morning, when I slipped a barrette into your matted hair, I called you cute. You are, you know. You can't help it. You can't. You.

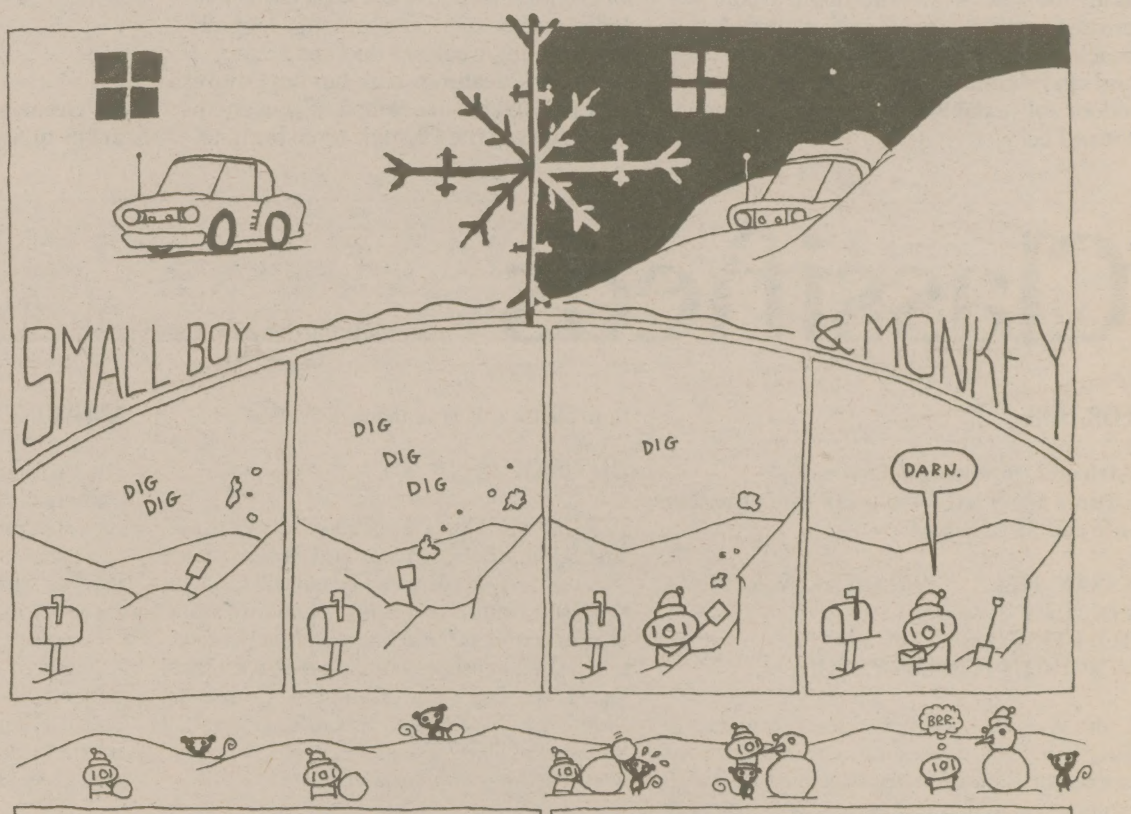
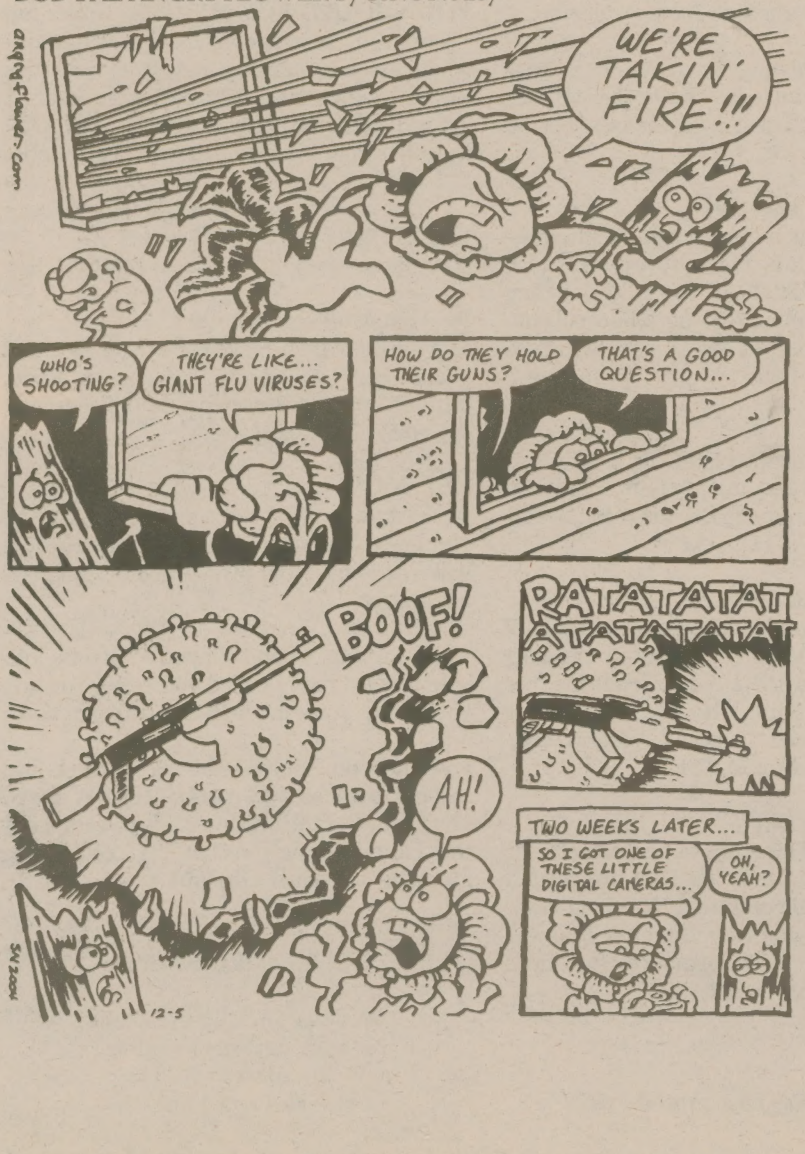
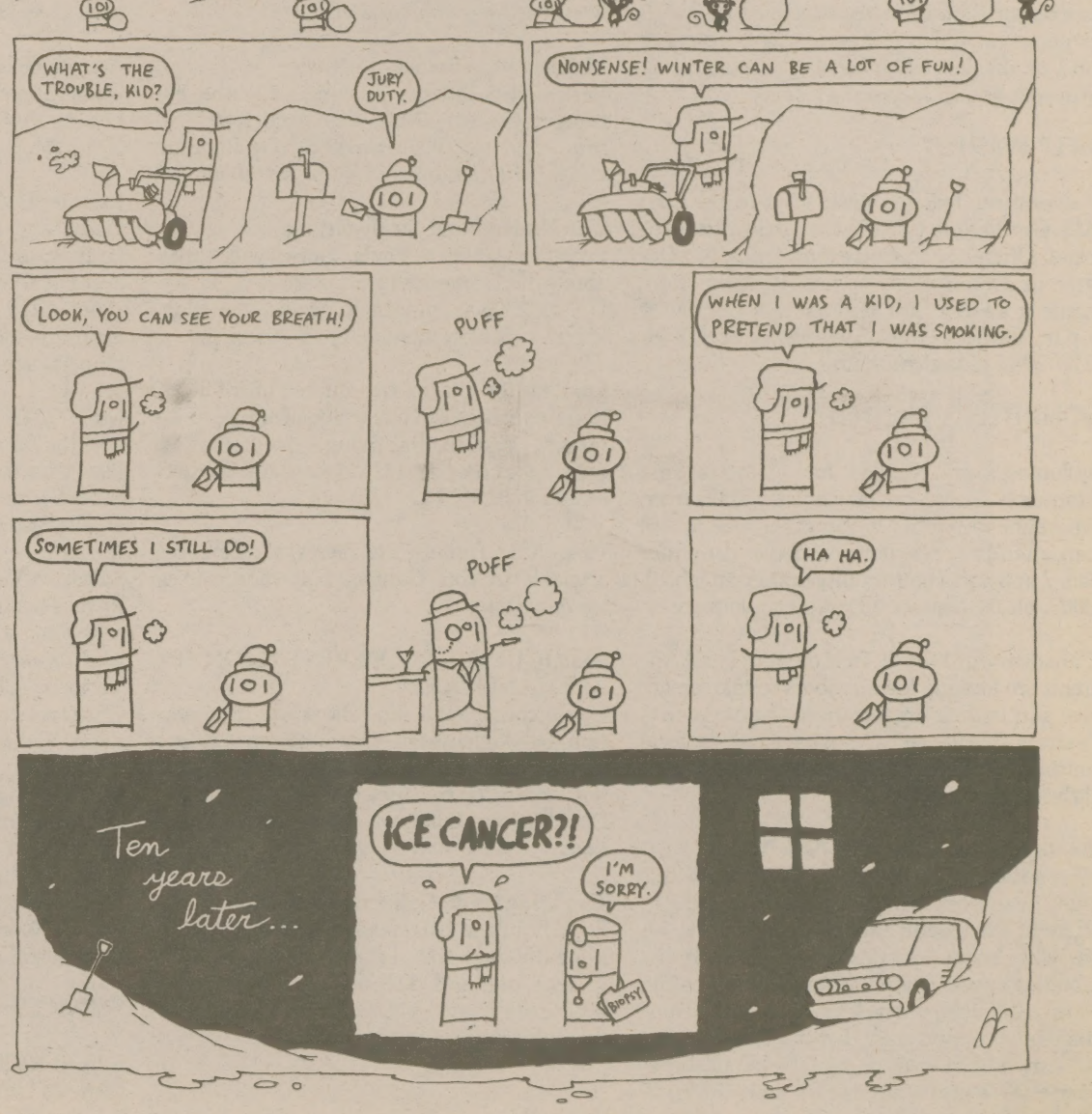
From now on, I only like blankets, towels and sarongs because they can be worn as skirts. You are one of the only men who wears skirts that I know. I saw you standing, cold, by the fountain—or was it a dream?

CLASSIFIED RATES

Students and clubs | $2/issue
Non-students | $2/line
Businesses | $6/line
Hey you! | free


SAM & FUZZY
©2004 BY SAM LOGAN.
NO, FUZZY. WE'RE NOT WATCHING EXTREME TEEN HIGH: THE SEXY YEARS. IT IS THE WORST SHOW IN THE HISTORY OF TELEVISION.
HA! THAT'S JUST YOUR OPINION.
NO, IT'S A FACT. THE WRITING IS HACKNEYED AND THE ACTING JUST PLAIN BLOWS.
THERE ARE NO FACTS, SAM. IT'S ALL RELATIVE. THE TAINTING FORCES OF PERSONAL BIAS MAKE TRULY OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS IMPOSSIBLE.
TV TODAY
IT CAN'T ALL BE RELATIVE, FUZZY. THERE MUST BE SOME COMMON GROUND! HOW ELSE COULD SOCIETY TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MONA LISA AND A FAST FOOD COMMERCIAL?
ARBITRARY STANDARDS ENFORCED WITH VIOLENCE.
THAT'S THE STUPIDEST--
SWAT!
--GACK!
WRONG OPINION!
NEW COMICS EVERY MONDAY, WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY AT: WWW.SAMANDFUZZY.COM


KOREA by De Vere
APPROACH #1: THE INTERVENTION
JANE, I DON'T KNOW IF BLATANT INTERFERENCE IS RIGHT IN THIS SITUATION.
YES, QUINN IS DEPRESSED, BUT HOW MUCH IS OUR INTERVENTION GOING TO HELP? THIS SEEMS LIKE SOMETHING HE'S GOING TO HAVE TO WORK OUT ON HIS OWN. I FEEL BAD ABOUT TELLING HIM HOW TO LIVE HIS LIFE.
TREVOR, THERE ARE FAR WORSE THINGS FOR YOU TO FEEL BAD ABOUT.
LIKE WHAT?
YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE A DICK. OR YOU COULD BE A NAZI SYMPATHIZER. OR A NAZI SYMPATHIZER WITH NO DICK.
YOU KNOW, I REALLY LOVE THE KIND OF PERSPECTIVE YOU PUT THINGS IN.
JUST GET IN THERE AND START INTERVENING!
UM... QUINN? HELLO?
YES?
JANE AND I HAVE BEEN THINKING... WELL MOSTLY JANE. QUINN, YOU'RE REALLY DEPRESSED. WE THINK MAYBE YOU SHOULD BE ON ANTI-DEPRESSANTS OR SOMETHING.
LIKE WHAT? ONE OF THE THREE KINDS I'VE ALREADY BEEN PRESCRIBED? THE ONES I DON'T TAKE BECAUSE THEY DON'T WORK?!
YOU KNOW WHY THEY DON'T WORK? ALL THEY DO IS TRICK YOU INTO THINKING YOU'RE HAPPY!
OF COURSE THEY DO QUINN! THAT'S THE IDEA.
HOLD ON, YOU'RE NOT TRYING TO FIX ME? YOU JUST WANT ME TO PRETEND I'M ALRIGHT?
BASICALLY. I JUST DON'T WANT TO DEAL WITH YOU WHEN YOU'RE LIKE THIS.
I AM TRULY TOUCHED BY YOUR SENTIMENTS AND CONCERN FOR MY WELLBEING I AM.
PROBLEM SOLVED! START POPPING BACK THOSE HAPPY PILLS! THINK OF IT AS A SERVICE TO YOUR FRIENDS. AND ANYONE ELSE WHO HAS TO DEAL WITH YOU!
YEAH, YOU SELFISH BIT.



BOB THE ANGRY FLOWER by Steve Notley